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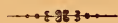
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# SERMON

DELIVERED IN BOSTON, MAY 26, 1829,

BEFORE

THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATION

OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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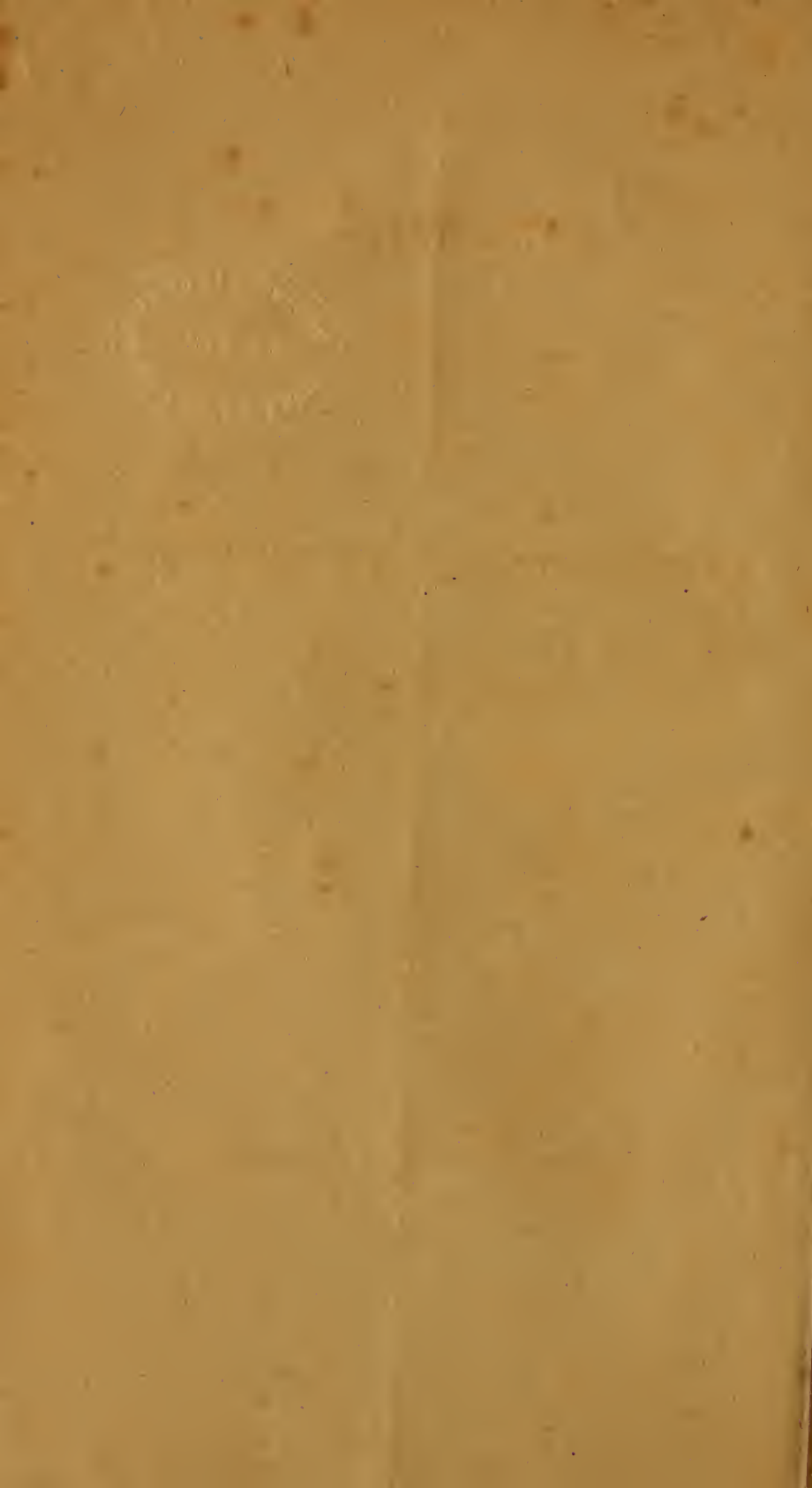
BY JOHN HUBBARD CHURCH, D. D.

Pastor of the Church in Pelham, N. H.

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BOSTON:  
PUBLISHED BY PERKINS & MARVIN.

.....  
1829.





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# SERMON

DELIVERED IN BOSTON, MAY 26, 1829,

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THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATION

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BY JOHN HUBBARD CHURCH, D. D.

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It is in compliance with the wishes and advice of beloved brethren, that the author consents to the publication of the following Discourse. Having but a few hours to prepare to preach before the Association, by the request of their Committee of Arrangements, he could do no more than take a Sermon he had preached on another occasion, and make some hasty alterations and additions. Let Christ be honored, and the preacher may very willingly be abased.

## SERMON.

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Acts, viii. 5.

THEN PHILIP WENT DOWN TO THE CITY OF SAMARIA, AND  
PREACHED CHRIST UNTO THEM.

To form correct views of evangelical preaching, is all-important; for the Gospel is the only appointed means of salvation. Let this be perverted by the preacher, and can it still be God's means of saving the soul? Is all preaching equally safe to the hearer? Is none to be avoided as ruinous? Why did Christ say, "Take heed what ye hear?"\* And why did Paul say, when some perverted the Gospel in a single doctrine, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed?"†

By what criterion, then, shall preaching be tested? Undoubtedly by the example of the apostles and their approved fellow-laborers. By knowing what they preached, we may form a correct decision.

The example of a primitive evangelist is selected for the present occasion, with the belief that my beloved and respected brethren will feel interested in such a subject.

Philip preached Christ to his hearers. In doing this, he would set him forth as the sum and the life of the great

\* Mark, iv. 24.

† Gal. i. 8.

system of evangelical truth. The subject is too copious now to be discussed in full. To some first principles of the doctrine of Christ I must confine myself.

To preach Christ truly, is to preach him just as the Scriptures do. How then do the Scriptures present him?

1. As Man.\* Thus he was first revealed as the seed of the woman; and afterwards as the seed of Abraham; as the prophet which the Lord should raise up in the midst of Israel; as the son of David; the son of a virgin; and the man whose name is the Branch. This was all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He was born of a virgin of the house of David, and so, according to the flesh, he was the son of David and the seed of Abraham. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman."† Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, the Son of God took part of the same. He was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man. How often he called himself the Son of man; and also manifested himself as such. Who, on seeing him, ever doubted his being a man? His friends so considered him in saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" And likewise his foes, in saying, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Peter called him a man approved of God; and Paul, the man whom God has ordained to judge the world in righteousness. He must then be exhibited as a man in our preaching. Let his proper humanity be concealed, and he is not truly represented as our kinsman Redeemer.

2. Christ is as fully declared in the Scriptures to be God. David in Spirit called him Lord. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I shall make thine enemies thy footstool."‡ Thus David acknowledged his divine superiority, although his son according to the flesh.

The son of Mary is divinely called Immanuel, "God with

\* This and the following particulars are designed to specify some of the leading views which the Scriptures give of Christ, without regarding precise logical distinction.

† Gal. iv. 4.

‡ Psal. cx. 1.

us," and "God manifest in the flesh." "The Word was God,"\* and was made flesh, and manifested his glory by his works, which bare witness of him that he and the Father are one. Hence he said, "The Father is in me, and I in him. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I and my Father are one."† Of the Israelites, Paul says, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."‡ This view of Christ as God over all, as well as man, exactly accords with Isaiah's description of him :—"Unto us a child is born ; unto us a Son is given ;—and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace."§ What titles can be more expressive of supreme divinity ?

According to Zechariah, Jehovah himself came to his people at Christ's appearing. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion ; for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people ; and I will dwell in the midst of thee ; and thou shalt know that the LORD of Hosts hath sent me unto thee."|| The Lord here is Jehovah ; and what is here said of Jehovah's coming was fulfilled in Christ ; and therefore Christ is represented to be Jehovah. Jehovah sent Jehovah ; for the Father sent the Son : and the Son said, "I and my Father are one ;" one Jehovah in essence, but two in person. The Holy Ghost was also jointly concerned in this mission : "The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me."¶ The glory of Jehovah, which Isaiah saw, was, according to John, the glory of Christ ; and therefore Christ is Jehovah.

In tempting their God in the wilderness, the Israelites tempted Christ ; and therefore Christ is the God of Israel. "He came unto his own ; and his own received him not." Jeremiah says of the righteous Branch to be raised unto

\* John, i. 1.  
§ Isa. ix. 6.

† John, x. and xiv.  
|| Zech. ii. 10, 11.

‡ Rom. ix. 5.  
¶ Isa. xlviii. 16.

David, meaning the Messiah, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."\* This is explained by Isaiah : "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness."† But Paul teaches that this righteousness is in Christ only. Did he contradict the prophets? God forbid. Then Christ is Jehovah; for the apostle, by being found in Christ, had in him that righteousness which the prophets testified to be in Jehovah.

Paul says that Christ, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."‡ But how is this possible, unless he is the true God? If the Son is not equal with the Father in his divine nature, he does rob him of his glory, in saying that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

"Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb; I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."§ But this exclusive work of Jehovah is the work of Christ. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."|| Does not this most clearly show Christ to be Jehovah?

Why did the Jews with such pertinacity seek the Saviour's life? Because he made himself the Son of God, equal with the Father. To justify his healing a man on the Sabbath, he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."¶ When he said at another time, "I and my Father are one;" then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father;

\* Jer. xxiii. 6.

§ Isa. xlv. 24.

† Isa. xlv. 24.

|| Col. i. 16, 17.

‡ Phil. ii. 6.

¶ John, v. 17, 18.



for which of these works do ye stone me?" They replied, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."\* When he was on trial for his life, the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."† On his affirming this, the Jewish council condemned him to be guilty of death for blasphemy; and then they demanded of Pilate his crucifixion, saying, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."‡ Now if Jesus Christ is only a mere man, and not the Son of God, equal with the Father in his divine nature, then he was indeed guilty of blasphemy, and he was justly condemned to die; and the Jews and Pilate were justified in putting him to death. But is it so? Did Christ die for his own sin? Or did the Jews deny the Holy One and the Just, and kill the Prince of Life? Which did his resurrection prove?

And this was the great question at issue between Christ and those who denied him, whether he was only a man, or the Son of God and man united. No question was then agitated, whether he was a created, or a derived, dependent being, of a higher order than man. He made no claim of this kind for them to contest. But his claim was simply this; that while he was truly the Son of man, he was also the Son of God, and worthy of the same divine honor as the Father. For this claim, he was crucified; but his resurrection confirmed his claim as just. This indeed declared him to be the Son of God, according to his divine nature.

3. The Scriptures reveal Christ as the only Mediator. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."§ It is through the mediation of his Son that God reconciles sinners to himself, in restoring them to his favor and image. And the Son in human nature is admirably fitted for this purpose. He is one in whom God

\* John, x. 30—33.    † Matt. xxvi. 63.    ‡ John, xix. 7.    § 1 Tim. ii. 5.

and man can place perfect confidence. None shall receive injury from his mediation. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

The Son, as Mediator, acts in subordination to the Father. This is the reason of his saying, "My Father is greater than I."\* The son of an earthly king would speak of his father as greater in office, while they were equal in nature. The Son of God as Mediator must act in a lower capacity. He received a commandment of the Father, and came to do his will. How then can he be truly represented in his official character, but as appearing and acting as inferior in station? In his assumed character of Mediator, the Son cannot be equal in office with the Father; but the Father must be greater.

4. Jesus Christ is represented as the second Adam. The first Adam "was a figure of him that was to come." Between these two persons, there exists a very striking analogy. Each stands as the head of those whom he represents; Adam as the head of all mankind, and Christ as the head of all the children of God; and each has acted in such a capacity, that what he has done very deeply affects all connected with him. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."† Christ is the surety of a better cove-

\* John, xiv. 28.

† A very important principle is here disclosed, Rom. v. 19. It is this: that God can justly constitute one to represent and act for others, so that they shall be constituted righteous by his obedience, or sinners by his disobedience. Had Adam remained obedient, and all his posterity been constituted righteous by his obedience, then God's covenant with him would have been perfectly satisfactory to all the millions of our world; for they would all have inherited everlasting life as the reward of righteousness. It is because by one man sin entered into the world, and by his one offence judgment came upon all to condemnation, that God's ways are thought not to be equal. But "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." The above principle involves this question: 'Whether every man should stand for himself, or whether the first father of mankind should be appointed as the federal head and representative of the rest?' The only wise and just God has decided that the latter is the wisest and best method. And who can deny his wisdom and goodness in this thing, and not charge him foolishly? The fact exists, that in Adam all died; and they are dead by his one offence,



nant than that made with Adam, or that made with Israel at Sinai. The latter was not faultless ; and the former not only failed, by reason of transgression, to give life, but also entailed sin and death on all Adam's race. But Christ, by a better covenant, gives life to all his seed. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." "For I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."\* The Lord Jesus is thus the head and source of life to all his redeemed people. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."† "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell ;"‡ that of his fulness all his people may receive, even grace for grace, and grow up into him as the head in all things. They are predestinated to be conformed to his image, that he may appear as the first-born among many brethren, saying, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."

5. Jesus Christ is set forth as a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood. He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. By the law, they stood condemned, and must endure the curse, except he was made a curse in their stead. And therefore he offered himself as a sacrifice to God. In his great love to the church of his redeemed, he was willing that his soul should be made an offering for their sins ; and the Lord laid on him all their iniquity, and he bare their sins in his own body on the tree. This fulfilled the typical transactions on the day of annual expiation for sin, when Aaron killed the goat of the sin-offer-

being constituted sinners by his disobedience. And the fact will exist, in spite of human reasoning to the contrary. No murmuring of man can affect God's righteous decision. He will vindicate himself, and convict every complainer. Do the friends of evangelical truth, at the present day, sufficiently vindicate this part of the divine conduct towards man ?

\* John, vi. 37, 40 ; and x. 10.

† John, v. 26.

‡ Col. i. 19.

ing for the people, and brought the blood within the veil, and sprinkled it before the Lord on the mercy-seat; and then laid both his hands on the living goat, confessing over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat, that being sent into the wilderness, he might bear upon him all their sins unto a land not inhabited. Thus the Father made his only begotten Son an offering for sin, that he might be a just God and a Saviour. The atonement, which Jesus made by enduring the cross, is the wonderful expedient of Divine Wisdom to maintain the law, and to honor the holiness and justice of God, while he saves sinners, to the praise of the glory of his grace. It is not designed to move God to show mercy; but to render the exercise of his mercy consistent with his righteousness as moral governor. And in laying down his life for the sheep, for those given to him by the Father in the eternal covenant, Jesus is also the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. His death has not only secured the salvation of the elect; but it has also opened the door of mercy to all who hear the gospel. They are all entreated to turn and live. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."\* The remedy is amply sufficient for all; and effectual to all that believe, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

6. Jesus Christ is also declared to be "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."† The law not only condemns to death for transgression; but also demands a perfect righteousness as the condition of eternal life. This is the first covenant. The threatening of death as the wages of sin, implied the promise of life as the reward of obedience. This promise of life was afterwards expressed, when Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, "that the man which doeth these things shall live by them."‡

\* John, iii. 16.

† Rom. x. 4.

‡ Rom. x. 5.

When man, by sin, failed of having this righteousness by his own obedience, God still required the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled by a Surety, in order to his bestowing the gift of eternal life : and therefore Christ fulfilled and brought in everlasting righteousness, besides making reconciliation for iniquity,\* that believers may be made the righteousness of God in him ; or, on account of his merits, have justification of life. This accords with the prediction : “The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake ; he will magnify the law, and make it honorable.”† “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified.”‡ And hence, when the apostle has proved that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, he says that “the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all them that believe ;”§ and therefore believers are “not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.”|| Whoever is thus justified, is made an heir “according to the hope of eternal life.” Being made righteous by the obedience of Christ, he is entitled to “the reward of the inheritance.”

The unspeakable preciousness of Christ, in this view, is strongly evinced by the declaration of Paul. In his unbelief, he thought that as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless. But after about thirty years’ experience of the Saviour’s merits, and devotedness to his service, he said : “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him ; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”¶

“David also described the blessedness of the man unto

\* Dan. ix. 24.  
§ Rom. iii. 22.

† Isa. xlii. 21.  
|| Gal. ii. 16.

‡ Isa. xlv. 25.  
¶ Phil. iii. 7—9.

whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”\* Where sin is not imputed, but forgiven; there the righteousness of God by faith is imputed for justification. And Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also;”† and they be blessed with faithful Abraham, as his seed and heirs according to the promise.

This doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, was the grand means of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. One of the Reformers calls it ‘the principal hinge by which religion is supported;’ and says, ‘this is a point which deserves an attentive consideration; that we obtain justification before God, solely by the intervention of the righteousness of Christ.’ How can it be otherwise, when his oath requires us to say, if we would be accepted of him, “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Yes, ‘the just by faith shall live,’—live and bring forth fruit unto God; for in Christ, they have “righteousness and strength.”†

\* Rom. iv. 6—8.

† Rom. iv. 11.

‡ The imputation of Christ’s righteousness seems to have no place in some modern sermons pertaining to justification. But is not this imputation according to Scripture? For Paul says, that righteousness, without works, is imputed for justification. And is not the correctness of the expression easily apprehended? For neither Adam, nor any who descended from him, could be justified, under the first covenant, without the perfect righteousness which the law requires. And can any be justified, under the covenant of grace, without a righteousness as perfect? But no one can have this perfect righteousness in himself, because he has sinned. He can have it in the Lord alone as his Surety, and by its being reckoned to him for his acceptance with God as righteous in his sight; as though he had in himself fulfilled all righteousness.

Two or three reasons may be assigned for the prejudice of some against this doctrine of imputation. One is, the opinion that we need nothing but pardon for the sake of what Christ has done. But does the bare release of a poor man from prison, by discharging his debt, make him the son and heir of the king? Has Christ done nothing more than redeem us from the curse of the law? Has he not by his obedience merited more than this for us? And is not eternal life the gift of God through him, or for the sake of his right-



7. Jesus Christ is declared to be a Priest and a King on his throne. "We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." There he has presented himself with the blood of the everlasting covenant; the Father has accepted his sacrifice, and sworn unto him, "Thou art a Priest forever." There he makes intercession for all who come to God in his name; pouring on them "the spirit of grace and supplication;" and granting them boldness to enter into the holiest by his blood, and to draw near in full assurance of faith, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need: and through him their spiritual sacrifices are acceptable unto God.

He also reigns as King of all the saints. For this purpose, all authority is given him in heaven and on earth. He is made Head over all things unto the church. And he must reign, till all enemies are put under his feet. His saints on

eousness? Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. The orthodox faith, as expressed by Edwards, is this; that "a person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment; and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life." And he remarks, that "we are no more justified by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had done the works, or fulfilled the obedience of the law."

Another reason is, not distinguishing between imputation in its primary and secondary sense. In the primary sense of the term, that is imputed to a person which properly belongs to him, as when his own righteousness or his own sin is imputed to him. But in the secondary sense, that is imputed to a person, as though it were his, which is not his, but another's. It is in this sense only that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer. It is, and ever will be, the righteousness of Christ; but it is imputed or reckoned to the believer, as though it were his, for his acceptance with God as righteous. "In the Lord have I righteousness." In him I am justified. "Jesus hath liv'd and died for me."

A third reason is, that it is viewed to be such a transfer of Christ's righteousness as is either impossible, or if possible, it would supersede personal holiness. But no such transfer is intended by this imputation. The transfer, if the term be used, must be in a secondary or figurative sense. A literal transfer of righteousness is no more possible than a literal imputation. Christ is indeed made sanctification to the believer. But this is not done by literally transferring to him his personal holiness; but by being the meritorious and the efficient cause of his sanctification.

I am the more tenacious of this doctrine, because it is so necessary to a complete view of Christ as our Saviour. We need his righteousness as well as his atonement. These are inseparably connected, and equally vicarious. And if we conceal either of them, we deny to Christ an essential part of his merits for our complete salvation and blessedness in heavenly glory. To him, as our Redeemer and our Head, the glory of the whole belongs.

earth constantly need his protection and power to save. They have sins to subdue, and enemies to conquer. On what can they rely, but his almighty arm? What can they do without his Spirit? How can they be strong, but in his might; or victorious, but through the power of his grace? His service, as their King, they delight to perform. He is so excellent in himself, his authority is so sweetened with his love, and they feel their obligations so great, that they cheerfully say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" They trust in their Priest, and obey their King; nor can one be neglected, and the other done.

As Priest and King on his throne, he has a kingdom of redeemed sinners, whom he washes from their sins in his own blood, and makes priests and kings unto God. This kingdom he now extends in our world, in fulfilment of his word, that others shall hear his voice and have eternal life. The Son quickeneth whom he will. The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. His people shall be willing in the day of his power. In his majesty he shall ride prosperously; and shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied in having the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

When the work of his grace on earth is completed, the King will sit on the throne of his glory, to judge the world in righteousness. Before him shall be gathered all nations. And in closing the final judgment, he will say to the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" and to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Then all the redeemed shall reign in life by Jesus Christ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

## APPLICATION.

1. The great work of the Gospel minister is to exalt and honor the incarnate Son of God. For this, he is invested with his office. By the Holy Ghost he is made a minister of Christ, if he is one in deed and in truth. And as the Spirit glorifies Christ, so must the minister do this in being led by the Spirit. He must preach, not himself, but Christ Jesus his Lord. Those who are not called and led by the Spirit, may think lightly of Christ, and deny, rather than exalt him, as Peter said to those who had denied him in demanding his death for making himself the Son of God: "This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner."\* When the son came into his father's vineyard, the husbandmen said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him." How many have very ungratefully made the humiliation of the Son of God his reproach. Because for our salvation he has appeared in the likeness of men and in the form of a servant, he is denied to be "God over all, blessed forever."† But can the true minister thus deny him? Will the Spirit of Christ lead him to do this? No: those whom he sends to preach the Gospel will exalt and honor the Lord Jesus as the true God and eternal life. They will delight to make known in the clearest manner his divine dignity and excellence, and to preach his unsearchable

\* Acts, iv. 11.

† Mr. Scott, speaking of those "who refuse the Lord Jesus those honors which he demanded to himself," (Pract. Obs. on 1 Cor. xii.) says, "What do such men, but 'call Jesus accursed?' They may speak of him as a good man, or an able teacher; but while they reject his priesthood, and deny his Deity as one with the Father, what do they less than charge him with blasphemy and imposture, in evidently claiming this equality; and with abetting idolatry, in teaching 'all men to honor the Son even as they honor the Father?' And do they not, in effect, justify the Jewish rulers in putting him to death, as 'an Anathema,' for saying, 'I am the Son of God?' Can such men speak by the Holy Spirit, or according to the language of inspiration?" I make this quotation, I hope, with kind feelings to every one to whom it applies. I seriously view them on very dangerous ground; and would earnestly entreat them to pause and consider, what they do. No object can be dearer to my heart than to have them know and honor the Lord Jesus as "the true God and eternal life;" "that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

riches. As the apostles could not join with those who denied the Holy One and the Just, so neither can those do it, who know his name, as being above every name ; but they must set him forth in all their preaching as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person ; the only begotten of the Father, who is full of grace and truth, and in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; God manifest in the flesh ; Jehovah our righteousness.

2. The preaching which exalts Christ must abase men. Why did God send forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law ? Why did the Son of God and the heir of all things make himself poor and endure the cross ? To redeem rebels from the righteous curse of the law. How heinous their sins, how great their guilt, which required such an exalted person to interfere with his own blood for their forgiveness with God. What does so abase human pride as the infinite dignity and the cross of Christ ? O what is the depth of man's ruin, and how just his condemnation, as seen in the crucifixion of the Son of God ! Who can glory in the cross of Christ, unless he is deeply humbled for his sins ! What a sense of sin must the doctrine of the cross pour upon the mind ! How just and holy must the divine law appear ! What a contrast is given, between the love of God and the enmity of the carnal mind ! See the Saviour's dying love and the sinner's ingratitude ! Who is not humbled at the sight ! Who can resist this love ! Who will not repent at the foot of the cross ! Shall pride prevent ? Will not the Saviour's blood subdue it ? What then must await the proud in heart ? Is mercy offered to you at this expense of most precious blood ? And, if you refuse, can you escape the wrath of God ?

3. The object of preaching Christ is the salvation of them that believe. These he came to redeem from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself as a peculiar people, that he may be glorified in them, and they in him. He "loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and



cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church." The minister's object, then, is to win and espouse souls to Christ. Men, by nature, are wedded to the law as a covenant of works. They seek life by its deeds, or by some righteousness of their own. But the law condemns, and can never justify one of Adam's race. They must therefore become dead to the law by the body of Christ, and be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead. For this purpose, the law must be laid open in all its extent and spirituality, and immutable obligation, and endless penalty. Without the law, sin is dead ; but when the commandment comes, sin revives, and the sinner feels himself condemned to death. Who can remain alive in his own apprehension, when the law is powerfully applied, convincing of sin, destroying false hopes, and humbling the heart ? Yes, let the law and the cross of Christ be preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the subjects of his special grace will say, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless, I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

I feel, beloved Brethren of this Pastoral Association, my need of your special, candid indulgence. The request to perform this service is so very recent, that I perform it under peculiar disadvantages. But I am gratified to see your faces once more in the flesh. I rejoice that to such a band of Brethren is this grace given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and that you are called to do this in a period so highly interesting and auspicious to his cause. How animating are the signs of the times ! Who can doubt that Zion will soon arise and shine with meridian brightness ! But how much does this enhance the responsibilities of her present members ! When did her ministers need so much love and

zeal, so much humility and meekness, wisdom and prudence, self-denial and fortitude? Can we expect the kingdom to rise and be extended, without exciting new opposition? Will not the adversary adopt every method in his power to retain his subjects, and assail the watchmen in every part that is vulnerable? I trust that none of my Brethren are ignorant of his devices. But is there no reason to fear that through his subtlety he will beguile some into paths which they should not tread? Has he not at this time many facilities for doing this? You know the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed. What combined influence of various interests and connexions is made to bear on our minds? How fascinating is the friendship of the world, and what demands are made of conformity to its spirit and maxims? How much is a compromise solicited between the truth as it is in Jesus and the carnal mind? It may be suggested that the doctrines of the Gospel must be cast in a new mould, and be polished by man's device, or they will not be received; that the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth are too obsolete for modern refinement, and the language too spiritual for the learned and wise of this enlightened age; and so the Gospel of the glory of Christ must have a secular dress, which shall more commend it to worldly men. An excellent minister in England\* has said, "If such preaching is the Gospel, it is the Gospel heathenized, and will tend to heathenize the minds of those who deal in it." There is also, my Brethren, the danger of philosophy and vain deceit, as in the days of Paul. The sons wish to be wiser than their fathers, and to make the things of the Spirit of God more easily understood and more readily received by the natural man. And this brings us on other ground, which is dangerous. There is inducement to adulterate the truth, and to make it less offensive to the hearers. This gives them impressions of the truth which are not correct. But many who

\* Rev. Andrew Fuller.

receive these wrong impressions will express their satisfaction and hope of profiting by what they hear. They commend the preacher; and he is induced to cherish their views and feelings, with a fond hope that they are coming to the knowledge of the truth. And then there will be others, who will wish for the truth to be smoothed down still more. A way is thus opened for a gradual but increasing departure from the faith once delivered to the saints. Its mark is this; the faith is not presented as God presents it in his word. How much, dear Brethren, we need an unction from the Holy One, that we may keep ourselves pure from all these things; and be able always to say with the apostle, that we are not as many which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

I feel a peculiar veneration for this city, for the sake of the Fathers, who have here lived for Christ and his Church. I love to read and repeat the divine sentiments which flowed from their hearts. One of them,\* in directions to a candidate for the ministry, says, "I must advise you that the genuine doctrines of grace be all of them always with you as the very salt and soul of your sermons. Assert always the necessity of turning and living unto God, and yet such an impotency in the wounded and corrupt faculties of man as renders a supernatural and regenerating work of sovereign grace necessary for it. Show people how to plead the sacrifice of our Saviour, that they may be forgiven; and how to lay hold on his righteousness, that they may be accepted with God. Show people how to overcome and mortify and crucify their evil appetites, by repairing to the cross of our Saviour; and how to derive strength from him for the doing and the bearing of all that they are called unto. Show the people of God how to take the comfort of their eternal election, and special redemption, and insured perseverance; and at the same time, fetch such mighty incentives to holiness

\* Cotton Mather, D. D.

from these hopes, which will forever cause those that have them to purify themselves."

Now, Brethren, does not the above very much accord with the manner of Paul, especially in his systematic epistle to the saints at Rome? Will any regard it as too antiquated? But it is "the good way," "the old paths" of Prophets and Apostles. I have no desire for a new way, or new path. We are to expect no improvements in the doctrines of grace, or in the life of faith on the Son of God; for these are the same in all ages, being taught by the same Spirit, and therefore admit of no such improvements as are made in human arts and sciences. That which is most to be desired, is a great increase of spiritual illumination in the church, so that the watchmen shall see eye to eye, being full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and abounding in a clear, spiritual discernment of the same truths which the Spirit of God has always taught in his word.

In the Election Sermon preached in this city about ninety years ago, the author,\* in addressing his brethren, says, "Let Christ be the principal subject of our preaching. Let us lift him up on high in our congregations, and display his glory before our people; the glory of his divinity, the glory of his humanity, and the glory of the constitution of the person of Christ, who is both God and man in one person. Let us preach of the offices of Christ, of his precious benefits, of the endearing relations he stands in to his people, and of his most excellent example. Is Christ the very marrow, soul, and scope of the Scriptures? Then such sermons as have much of Christ in them come nearest to these sacred records, and we may conclude are most likely to do good. It is justly to be feared, that one great cause of the woful decay of vital piety in the Christian church, is the neglect which has been in preaching Christ. Blessed be God, we have had fathers who have been eminent for their preaching Christ; and it is

\* Rev. Israel Loring, of Sudbury.

matter of thankfulness that we yet have fathers among us, who account Christ the favorite subject in the course of their studies for the pulpit." Let us, my Brethren, hold the preaching of Christ in the same estimation as these worthy fathers have done.

And what do we, Brethren, so much need as the Spirit of Christ? It is easy to imbibe the spirit of the day, and with this spirit to take up the weapons of our warfare, and, as we think, to wield them very dexterously. But is there no danger that we shall do it as men, and not as the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus? Here, I apprehend, is no small danger. The prevalence of a wrong spirit, I most fear. For this the disciples were rebuked, when they suspected no such thing. How much we may grieve the Spirit of God, in earnestly contending for his truth! Do we not then lose more than we gain? Does not vital godliness decline, while the outer works of our holy religion are ably defended?

The author of the Election Sermon just named, quotes the famous Mr. Shepard as saying, "I saw my blessedness did not lie in receiving good and comfort from God, but in holding forth the glory of God and his virtues;" and then says, "This is what we have to do, even in our persons and walkings, to hold forth and represent the graces of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holiness of his doctrine which we preach; to express his humility, his meekness, self-denial, readiness for the cross, contempt of the world, heavenly-mindedness, benignity, condescension, and patience."

What is more difficult, or more important, beloved Brethren, than at all times to exercise and manifest the true spirit of the Gospel? On what, pertaining to ourselves, does our peace of mind, or success in our work so much depend? When the Gospel was preached by a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, much people were turned to the Lord. May we imitate the example, and have the same success.



To maintain a right spirit, we must watch unto prayer, and keep our hearts with all diligence. President Edwards observes, that “true Christian fortitude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things; in ruling and suppressing the evil and unruly passions and affections of the mind; and in steadfastly and freely exerting and following good affections and dispositions; without being blinded by sinful fear or the opposition of enemies. The strength of the good soldier of Jesus Christ appears in nothing more than in steadfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness, and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behaviour, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world.” And true Christian zeal, in the judgment of that man of God, ‘is the heat and fervor of a sweet flame of divine love. Bitterness against the persons of men is no part of it; the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, the further are persons from such bitterness, and the more full of love both to the evil and the good. And hence there is nothing in true zeal which is contrary to the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love. But it greatly promotes this spirit.’

What motives urge us, dear Brethren, to abound in this fortitude and zeal, and to promote the same in the members of our churches! How much is the honor of our Redeemer concerned! How many form their opinion of the Gospel which we believe and preach, by the spirit we manifest! If our professed faith and practice are at variance, how much do we prejudice men, and harden their hearts against the truth! The Saviour was meek and lowly in heart, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. And how much does he enjoin it on us to be converted and become as little children. This is the spirit of his kingdom. And it is by the increase and prevalence of this spirit, that Zion will arise and shine, as having the glory of the Lord.

I have now very frankly expressed to you, my Brethren, the feelings of my heart. You perceive that I see reason to fear, as well as to cherish animating hopes. From some present appearances, I fear a declension in our land ; but shall rejoice if it should be prevented by omnipotent grace. Except the Lord keep his people in the straight and narrow way, they will err from the truth, and wander from his paths. Man is prone to evil ; and with the saints, evil is present. God left Hezekiah, that he might know what was in his heart. He that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holdeth the stars in his right hand, may say, " I have somewhat against thee ;" and so withdraw his Spirit. We may offend by our self-complacency. This is distinct from the testimony of a good conscience ; and it is the opposite of Christian humility. It is a fond delight of what *we* are doing, and of the happy result of our plans and efforts. It inspires us with too much confidence of success in our undertakings. We think ourselves of importance, when in the sight of the Lord we should feel that we are nothing, and can do nothing without him. Our glorying is not good. New England has been extolled. The pride of being her sons has been indulged. I would earnestly call on every one to acknowledge Divine goodness towards this part of our nation. The Lord has here commanded his blessing. But none of the glory belongs to men. This is the Lord's. Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord. The Lord is with those who are with him. How intimate and spiritual is this union : "*Abide in me, and I in you.*" O that we may thus abide in Christ. Then his grace will be with us, and make us faithful unto death ; and he will give us a crown of life, at his appearing, which will never fade away. AMEN.





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REV. MR. COOKE'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

PASTORAL ASSOCIATION

OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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1841.



CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF DOCTRINAL PREACHING.

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A

# S E R M O N ,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

PASTORAL ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN

7441.11

PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON,

MAY 25, 1841.

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BY PARSONS COOKE.

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1841.



# S E R M O N .

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## II TIMOTHY, iv. 3, 4.

FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; BUT AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS SHALL THEY HEAP TO THEMSELVES TEACHERS, HAVING ITCHING EARS, AND THEY SHALL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES.

PAUL here urges Timothy to ply his ministry well while he may; for the time would come when the popular ear would demand what he could not wisely give, and when professing Christians would not endure sound doctrine, but would seek, through a constant change of ministers, the gratification of their lusts of mind, and of a prurient fancy. If the text gives character to an age of gospel hearers, that prefer a kind of preaching addressed to the imagination and the taste, and such as will fall pleasantly upon an itching ear, instead of that which will reach the heart and transform the soul, it is fully applicable to the present age. The taste of the age is told, by the kind of preaching which we know to be the most popular in it. Now what kind of preaching will draw after it the greatest throng of hearers? And how shall one qualify himself to be the most popular preacher? Shall he seek the solid gold, or the glaring tinsel of Christian eloquence? Shall he bathe in the fountains of eternal truth, and bring down the grasp of the strong doctrines upon the heart; or shall he affect the eloquence of words, the gorgeous display of language, the polish of

manner and style, the neatly turned period, the well-told anecdote, the fine spun sentimentalism, or the skilful play upon the passions? Will he not sooner reach his popularity, by sketching scenes in which the hearer's fancy may revel, than by using the bone and sinew of manly thought, to urge home great principles of gospel doctrine? If he shall use his fancy as a sort of kaleidoscope, holding a few fragments of thought in all varieties of reflection and refraction, covering his leanness here and there with a purple patch of poetry; if he shall strive to dazzle the mind when he should impress the heart, and be found gathering flowers to charm, when he should be uttering the momentous and soul-stirring truths of God; if by such means he can convert the house of God into a place of mere amusement, and preach himself, while he should be preaching Christ, he will carry with him the hosannas of the many. *He* has the gift for a popular preacher, and will go through our congregations altogether, as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument.

But let him speak as a dying man to dying men; let him address divine truth in naked simplicity, to the wants rather than the tastes of his hearers; let him, when occasion requires, give thorough exhibitions of the great doctrines of grace, and by manifestation of truth, and of the whole truth, commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and he will soon discover that he is not in the shortest way to popular favor. He will see itching ears averted from him. It will be whispered to him, that such an one is not fed by doctrinal preaching, and is longing for some good practical sermons. Another does not understand the doctrines, and thinks it unprofitable to hear them till he does understand them. Another thinks it a mistake in God to have revealed them. Another thinks it unwise for ministers to preach them. Another has thought that ministers had long ago laid aside

these shocking points of Calvinism, and is astonished to hear them preached in this *enlightened age*. And another *will not* hear them at any rate, and will leave the congregation if the minister continues to harp upon them. Most truly is the text descriptive of the taste of this generation. The time has come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will accumulate to themselves teachers.

We may therefore find a fit subject of discourse, in *the causes of the prevalent indisposition to endure sound doctrine, or, in other words, the causes of the decline of doctrinal preaching*.

I speak not now of the great and parent cause—human depravity—which is omnipresent in its action, and which in some degree works in both saints and sinners, and often makes the moral vision blench from beholding the full beams of gospel truth. Even where grace really but feebly exists, there yet lurks much of the loving of darkness rather than light—so that there always will be, more or less of dislike of doctrinal preaching. But our purpose now is, to look for causes of *a decline*, in the public taste for such preaching.

To this decline both ministers and people have contributed. A failure to *preach* sound doctrine, is a cause of forming the public taste against it. And whatever may have occasioned a failure to preach the doctrines, as they should be preached, must be reckoned among the causes of a public disrelish of them.

One cause of the decline may lie, in an unskilful handling of the doctrines by those who have preached them. Some have so connected the gospel doctrines with their metaphysical theories, that their preaching has been unintelligible to the mass of their hearers; and thus they have raised a prejudice against all gospel doctrines. Others have separated the doctrinal from the practical, and presented doctrines as a dry skeleton of theology, rather than

as a body of living and breathing truth. If the public ear had never been abused by the separating of what God has joined together ; if Christian practice had always been inculcated as drawing its main enforcements from the doctrines of grace, and if, when doctrines were preached, they had been preached as the divine and overpowering persuasives to a holy life ; the sickly disrelish of doctrines would have less prevalence. If the gospel must be rent in twain by its preachers, it matters not which of the fragments you retain. They who inculcate the practical and experimental religion without the doctrines, as the basis of experience and practice, and they who present the doctrines like truths in geometry, with no bearings on the conscience, equally contribute to estrange the public taste from them. It is as needful to show the use, as to prove the truth of the doctrines. There must be not a mere brandishing of the sword of the Spirit, to show its gleam and polish, but also a use of its edge and point. We have not done with the preaching of the doctrine of depravity, for instance, till we have brought the hearer with a broken heart to the foot of sovereign mercy. We have not done with the doctrine of the atonement, till we have fixed faith's eye on the Lamb of God, and given a firm seating to the truth, that being bought with a price we are not our own. Nor is God's sovereignty well preached, till the joy of the heart is awoke, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Nor the Trinity, till the hearer is made to see it the ground work of all his hopes, the platform of the most thrilling truths of the gospel. Now so far as this connection between the doctrinal and the practical has been overlooked by preachers, they have contributed to turn away the public taste from doctrinal preaching.

Again, in so far as preachers have distrusted the power of the doctrines, and blenched from an urgent demonstration of their stronger points, they have fostered this vitiated taste. If any have forgotten that these truths are



the products of God's wisdom, and may therefore be safely trusted as the instruments of God's work, to go freely in among the passions and consciences of men—if any have relied on their own prudence and skill, to cut and trim to the caprices of their hearers—if any, instead of coming squarely forward to the work, and laying on with the whole weight of the weapons of our warfare, so massive and keen, are found with soft hand patting the lion's mane and stroking the leviathan's scales, the whole course of their preaching is their testimony against the safety of sound doctrine. If the preacher be afraid of the doctrines, it were strange if the hearer should not take the contagion of his fears. If every sermon should contain an argument to prove it unsafe to preach the doctrines, that would be a most untractable congregation that would not be convinced of it, after having line upon line and precept upon precept. Yet every sermon from which fear excludes the doctrines, is such an argument, and the more convincing because it is a practical argument. Thus the preacher's fears, groundless at first, soon create good grounds to fear.

But what shall he do? If his hearers will not listen to the whole truth, is it not better to give them the part of truth which they will hear, than to drive them off when positive error is preached? That is not so clear. Positive error is not so much worse than negative error. Holding back the truth makes error of what is preached, by throwing it out of joint and proportion. Besides, negative error indulged, will most surely beget positive error. Almost all forms of error have their first spring in minds not preoccupied by sound doctrine. The question then amounts to this—if hearers will not hear us preach the truth, had we not better preach Universalism than drive them off to Universalists? And that answers itself.

But this alternative is presented to our fears oftener than it exists in reality. The foolishness of God is wiser than

men. In giving shape to his revelation, he did not make it all very good, *except* in one particular, and in that particular commit the grand mistake of leaving it bare of every thing that could command attention. He is not guilty of a revelation that needs false dealing to gain a hearing. But he has given us one which requires us to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by **MANIFESTATION OF TRUTH**, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If this gospel be from God, though it may be that owing to previous false dealing in a given time and place, men will not endure sound doctrine, no course of preaching *in the long run*, and all other things being equal, will lay as broad and deep a hold on the public mind, in this depraved and shattered world, as that which brings most fully out the spirit of the whole gospel. By heaping to yourselves teachers, and gratifying itching ears, by novel inventions and spiritual empiricism, and by humoring depraved tastes in covering up the offensive doctrines, you may draw delighted throngs around a distorted gospel. But that tide must have its ebb. The mass of mind not being rooted and grounded in the truth, is just prepared to be swept like chaff in another direction, by the next counter-gust of wind. Yea, it is fitted to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

A superficial, partial course of preaching, on its first introduction into a community, not preoccupied by sounder views, will usually attract the most hearers. Even Christ's preaching sent some away complaining, "These are hard sayings, who can hear them." And if Christ had kept back some offensive points, he might have retained some hearers which he lost. Yet such preaching as that of Christ and his apostles, will ever be found to have been most honored of God, in attracting a ransomed world

around the cross. The great question for the preacher to settle, is not what will raise the broadest cloud of dust for the moment, but what will best reach the heart and fit it for heaven? a heaven built on the foundation of those truths, which are a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek—not what will make the tallest edifice of wood, hay and stubble, but what will rear the broadest temple of lively stones, built up a spiritual house? It is a reflection on the wisdom of the master-builder, to fear to build after his plan. And the preacher's distrust of the power of divine truth, has averted the taste of many a hearer from sound doctrine.

Indolence of thought, both in preachers and hearers, is another cause of this distaste. It prevents preachers from laying in the resources, for bringing forth things new as well as old on doctrinal themes. The well is deep and they have nothing to draw with, and hence have not that living water. It is much easier for them to skim the surface, and gather the dew, of what is misnamed practical preaching. And for the hearer, doctrinal preaching too much taxes the intellect. He is too indolent to grasp the higher themes of Christian truth. Unless he have acquired from early instruction, or from some sense of the importance of truth, or from an inherent aptitude of mind, or what is more, from the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost—a taste for such subjects, there will be more or less aversion for a kind of preaching, which so taxes the thinking powers. And this indolence of thought is fostered in proportion as preachers shun the doctrines. It better suits an easy, cushioned piety, to sit and be passively borne along by hortatory appeals, and entertained with sparkling illustrations, than to hold the joints and follow the train of a doctrinal argument. And hence many cannot endure sound doctrine.

Another cause may be found in a superficial religious training of the young. Our congregations now are reared

in the Sabbath school. Formerly, Christian parents at least, had a sense of responsibility touching the religious education of their children. Their children went abroad to school for secular education, but the more sacred part of their training was done in the family—the school which God has organized, mainly for this purpose. But the introduction of Sabbath schools has operated to too great an extent, to take off from Christian parents the sense of responsibility before felt, and to throw it upon the Sabbath school teacher. The result is, the religious instruction has gone over a greater surface, and brought the hopes of salvation to many who would not have been reached by other means. Yet what is gained in surface is lost in depth. The aggregate of instruction imparted, may be greater, but the few leading minds who guide the tastes of the rest, have not so deep acquaintance and relish of the doctrines. In the commencement of the Sabbath school enterprise, fewer guards against superficial teaching were used. Sad experience had not then as it has now, taught us the danger of holding the mind in a play around the shell and husk of truth. It was a new thing to teach children the geography, history, botany and zoology of the Bible. And in the zeal created by this novelty, the theology of the Bible was in a measure forgotten. And the results of this omission now begin to be developed, in the tastes of our congregations. The child, reared to superficial thinking, has become a man, rejecting the pith and marrow of the gospel. We had better ministers and better hearers, when the child was put to conning by rote a catechism, which he did not understand, and held upon it till he did understand it, and in understanding it, was put in possession of the higher relations and harmonies of eternal truth.

This source of evil is aggravated by the shallowness of our current literature. If that sort of literature which is most circulated is most read, we must expect the public

taste to be sickly. To simplify and illustrate, and relieve the reader of all burden of thinking, seems to have been the main design of the nursing fathers of the popular mind, in their contributions to our literature. And that popular mind has been made an invalid by its over delicate nursing. It has been approached in its easy chair, its food composed chiefly of simples or vegetable productions. For want of appetite for strong meat, thought has been attenuated and attenuated, and reduced to pulp and nothingness, or whipped into a syllabub of beautiful froth, or served up in fiction as in a sugar plumb—yea, it has been even masticated if not digested lest it should cost the consumer too much effort. Thus he has had his intellectual growth without toiling or spinning. From the child's first book to the mathematician's last, (a book reached by few,) this labor-saving principle has pervaded most of our books of instruction, and marred whatever it has touched. And our books for popular reading have been made with the same design. What now if some one should write and publish a book like the ponderous folios of the Puritan age,—a book in which shall be found solid ingots of thought, lifted from the mine with giant hands, without polish or artificial attraction? What a sensation would the prodigy create! Nay, what ruin would it bring upon the publisher, and what oblivion upon the author!

And the *religious* popular reading has been smitten with the same debility. The process of grinding divinity of other days down into modern use, has been so accommodating to indolence, that comparatively few books for general reading have appeared, which either tax or promote the vigor of thought. There have been honorable exceptions to this remark; but we speak in general terms. Mind has been treated as if its labor were a *malum in se*; and thus crippled by its own inertia. The religious newspaper, the penny pamphlet, the religious novel, the ephemeral biography, the book of travels, have taken the



place in families, which in other days, Flavel, Howe and Baxter filled to great acceptance. And as to volumes of *printed sermons*, the very sight of them invites to drowsiness.

Now when it is borne in mind that the popular taste is adjusted to such a literature, secular and religious ; and that our congregations come from such reading to the hearing of the word, it is no wonder that so many cannot endure sound doctrine.

Then the active and stirring character of the present age aggravates the difficulty. The mind and body of the business world is propelled by steam. And its reading and thinking must be done in great haste. And they who write for such readers and thinkers must so write, that he that runs may read ; they must put their thoughts where one may catch them when passing in a rail-car.

Here, then, is a train of influences most adverse to a preparation of the public mind to receive sound doctrine. In former days the pulpit dispensed its treasures among a people deeply read in the lively oracles, and in the productions of the shining lights of the Puritan age. And the difference is that, between preaching to a congregation of Baxter's readers, and to a congregation of Bulwer's readers.

Then our improvements in the mode of theological education have brought no relief to this difficulty. Theological seminaries have greatly increased the advantages of students, and that in some respects to their disadvantage. They have carried the student's mind over a greater surface, but in too many instances failed to carry it to the needed depth of acquaintance with systematic theology. Formerly it was the custom for theological students to spend most of their time upon the system of theology, and that for want of the means of extensively pursuing the collateral branches. But now the tendency is in the other extreme. The novelty of the pursuit of



the other branches in theological seminaries, gave it an undue popularity. Attainments in biblical literature, church history, sacred rhetoric, and the like, *important in their place and proportion*, have been sought at the expense of weightier matters. A little of every thing has been acquired, in time which ought to have been spent in digging deep and laying the foundations well in the principal thing. Quinctilian's rule, that much reading of a few books, should be preferred to the slight reading of many, has been violated. Much effort has been put forth through the press and other channels — ex-cathedra opinions of our distinguished men and theological professors, have been circulated to magnify the *relative* importance of biblical studies over doctrinal theology. Such representations, coming from such sources, and with the charm of novelty, and untested by experience of their pernicious tendency, created a strong current against such studies as were needed to give thorough acquaintance with the doctrines as a system. And now we are reaping the fruits. It is not uncommon for young men, of the first standing, to come from the seminary, and show, when examined for ordination, a miserable deficiency in what should have been the main branch of their theological studies. While they come forth to be teachers, they have need that one should teach them the very first principles of the oracles of God. They may have rich stores of Greek and Hebrew lore, but they have failed to use those riches as the means of putting forth in plain English, the great truths of the gospel. And that not because they have not been diligent students, nor because they have not had able and laborious instructors in doctrinal departments. But because their labor has been misdirected by the taste and fashion which has been given to the schools. Their mind has been under a train of influences, disparaging doctrinal knowledge and its means. They have been made to feel that a sort of vulgarity and

obsoleteness was attached to this "*dogmatic theology*"—that other departments were more befitting the erudite and finished scholar, and promised more of the furniture of a popular and distinguished preacher. That such a current has been running through our seminaries, I trust none will dispute. But if this be fact, it is no wonder that our congregations are trained to disrelish sound doctrine.

Another mischief has lurked in our seminaries. German literature and German theology, (a muddy pool,) has been let in upon the fountains of our theological science. Because the infidels and pantheists of Germany had excelled in Greek and Hebrew letters, they were welcomed with distinguished honors, and recommended to our sons of the prophets, as fit helpers to the true interpretation of the Bible. German seminaries have been minutely described, and German masters have been magnified in the admiring ears of our young men. And that veneration of talent and learning, which is so powerful an element of the young student's mind, was carried over and placed upon the masters of the German schools. Our young men have been taught, that though these German masters were many of them rejectors of the divine authority of the Bible, this circumstance was in some sense an advantage, inasmuch as it made them more impartial, and free from sectarian bias. Just as if that obliquity of moral vision, which led themselves *away* from all truth, was just the thing to qualify them to lead others *into* all truth. Here is a surrender of the principle, that a right heart is needful to a right understanding of the Scriptures. And it involves the principle, that the Devil himself, because he has great talents, and no sectarian bias, would be a fit helper to theological studies. Thus, instead of making deep acquaintance with Edwards, Belamy, and Witherspoon, of our own land, and the masters of Puritan theology in the father land, whose intellects,

inferior to no Germans of this day, were chastened and guided by the Holy Ghost, we have placed our young men at the feet of those Gamaliels who know not whether there be any Holy Ghost. The result of giving such popularity to infidels, and transcendentalists, has been that time has been wasted in threading the mazes of error, and piety has lost its tone in converse with an infidel spirit. The intellectual vision has been blurred by attempts to read and interpret the Bible in the colored twilight of an infidel philosophy. Thus the free use of German literature has, in spite of all its advantages, done much to depress the standard of knowledge in theology, and diminish the amount of clear and sound instruction, coming from our pulpits. There has been more of biblical literature, but less of the soul and spirit of the Bible has been poured out over our congregations. We know perhaps more of the botany and zoology of Palestine, more of the rushes that grow on the banks of the Jordan, but less of the system of salvation that was finished upon Calvary. And the error here has not been, in the use of the means of biblical instruction, but in such a use, and in the use of such means, and in their use beyond the due proportion. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Unitarianism, with its nearer affinities to German transcendentalism, cannot live in its atmosphere. It has cultivated German literature till some of its most valued sons have imbibed the spirit, and are glorying in the delirious illusions, of a wretched pantheism. And though the descent from *our* ground would be farther and more difficult, it would be no wonder, if it should be taken by some ; so long as our course of theological study is made to lie through the dreams of pantheistic writers. And we are fairly called upon, in the providence of God, to review and test the wisdom of the policy, which installs an infidel philosophy to give law to the piety of the sons of the

Pilgrims. Can we wonder that the people will not endure sound doctrine, when the ministry studies theology with German spectacles, and walks for years in the fogs of pantheism.

If the object of this converse with the master spirits of pantheism, were to prepare the ministry to combat their delusion, and if our young men were led to the examination of their theories, with that express design, the object of the study would remove the danger. And unless the signs of the times deceive us, there will be occasion enough for public refutation of pantheism. To say nothing of recent developements in this country; a recent writer from Europe says, that "*pantheism is the great heresy of the nineteenth century.*" The St. Simonians were pantheists. The followers of Charles Fourier and Robert Owen are mostly pantheists. The celebrated Hegel, professor in Berlin, publicly taught pantheism to some thousands of pupils, who have spread this doctrine throughout Germany. Several professors in France maintain the same opinions. To their ranks are now added Messrs. de Lamennais and Strauss. Let Christians of all countries be warned then! Our real adversary, our great enemy, at the present time, is pantheism! It threatens us, it besets us on all sides; it aims to strangle Christianity in its gigantic arms. Against pantheism we must whet our swords and direct our blows; this is what we have to conquer and destroy." In this posture of things, there seems to be a sad and absurd mistake in our sending our young men to school to pantheistic writers, and that under the impression that such are valuable interpreters of the Bible.

Again, some of the machinery used to promote revivals, has aggravated the evil. Protracted meetings conducted by itinerant evangelists, usually leave an impression unfavorable to doctrinal preaching. The very design of such meetings, got up for the sake of producing a revival,

assumes an erroneous principle in theology. The Arminian placing moral suasion before the work of the Holy Spirit, assumes that that work can be secured by the mere adding of intensity to moral suasion, and he of course is consistent with himself, when he resorts to a protracted meeting as a means of producing a revival. He attaches to human machinery just the power which his theology attaches to it. But the theology of the Bible, while it puts no restrictions upon the frequency of our preaching the gospel in revivals, other than what the health of body and mind require, gives no occasion or countenance for the habit of sending abroad for famous revival preachers, arranging circumstances for scenic effect, and for startling appeals to public curiosity. This in us is bad theology, and bad consistency. It is inculcating error by our practice, and it brings preachers into temptation to *preach* error. The design of the meetings being based on error, can hardly be carried out without preaching error;—that design is, with the aid of animal passions and sympathies, to condense such a power of suasion on the public mind, as will draw in converting influence independently of sovereign grace; and minds acting in that design, though unconsciously, will be next to sure to utter thoughts in their preaching in harmony with it. But the greatest danger of error, lies in the temptation to omit important truth. The time is set in which the work must be done. The preacher's mind is touched by the limits of his time, and it insensibly seizes upon the topics of hortatory address and the instruments of moving the passions, and he cannot wait to see the salvation of God attending the enforcement of the doctrines of the cross. Thus these doctrines are unconsciously, if not by design, kept out of view. And though there be, as sometimes there is, a real work of grace in connection with such meetings, a greater proportion of spurious conversions occur than under ordinary preaching; and those really converted, not having



based their experience on a clear perception of the doctrines of grace, never come to apprehend them clearly, nor to love and encourage the preaching of them ; and churches replenished by them, can ill endure sound doctrines.

Again, an *excess of immediateism* pervading the public mind, is another source of the difficulty. It is very true, that ministers and churches ought to expect and shape their exertions for present results, so far as the nature of the case will admit. But much of the minister's work, consisting in laying foundations for future results, cannot be based on the expectation of present effect. And this work upon foundations, is very essential to the lasting prosperity of the church, and can no more be dispensed with than that which looks immediately to the conversion of sinners. The notion that the present conversion of the hearer, must, in all circumstances, be the immediate and only object of every sermon, is a piece of downright quackery. A missionary among the heathen is there for the conversion of sinners ; but he finds a vast labor to be done before he can bring the motives to conversion to direct and extensive bearing. And much of every minister's work must respect a good to be compassed in future years. We are encouraged to labor, under the promise that he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall come again bringing his sheaves with him. Our work is compared to that of the husbandman who waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the former and the latter rain. If Paul was sent to plant and Apollos to water, they must both wait awhile before they could reap the harvest.

The overlooking of this plain matter, in the Christian economy, has been disastrous, as affecting the policy as to doctrinal instruction. Preachers have been so anxious to reap at once, that they have declined to sow seed that



would require time to grow. And so they have either sown chaff, that could produce nothing, or else a sort of mushroom seed, that would produce its best in a night. Because direct exhortations and urgent appeals to the passions, seem more immediately related to present results, than plain instruction in Christian doctrines, they have been preferred. But the preference is founded on a great mistake—that of supposing that God has lodged all the quickening and impressive power of divine truth in a few detached texts and illustrations, and withheld it from the great and comprehensive principles of his word. This sickly reliance on a few favorite topics of exhortation, to the exclusion of the doctrines, seems like doing battle with two or three swivels, while we impose silence upon whole broad sides of heavier guns. Nay, if present impression were the only object; if the gospel ministry had come to its last day; if the morrow's sun were to pilot in the splendors and the terrors of the judgment day, and if we had our congregations before us for the last time, we could do nothing better than to draw the urgency of our last appeals from the great doctrines of grace. And yet in the conceit, that the doctrines are not suited to present effect, they are suffered by some to repose and rust in the magazine, as antiquated weapons, unsuited to present modes of battle.

But present results are but a small part of the great object of ministerial labor. Those labors which look to future and lasting results, are quite as important as the others; and this overhaste to do the work all at once, is like an attempt to hasten the growth of a plant by pulling up the blade. It excludes those forms of action and influence, which gradually bring up a church from weakness to broad and deep efficiency. It takes away the needful labor from settling the foundations, and bestows it upon garnishing the cupola, and so leaves the structure to be swept away when the tempest comes. It compels a

church in the choice of a minister, to get one that will build them up in a year. It makes a demand for a sort of preacher and preaching, that will annihilate all obstructions by force of popular and vehement declamation. A new church perhaps is formed; the outlays are freely made in expectation of speedy and rich results. A preacher is sought for his popularity and immediateism. The circumstances of the case and public expectation, bind him to build the church right up at once. He goes to the work on the false principle, that what is not done immediately is not done at all; and he proves it true in his own experience. The tide of popularity which the vehemence of his first efforts drew around him has its ebb, and having failed to throw the grasp of the powerful doctrines upon the heart of his hearers, he has lost his hold upon them and is left to emptiness. And while he has failed of his immediate object, he has thrown his hearers farther from the embrace of gospel doctrines, and from being rooted and grounded in the truth.

This view of our subject reveals a leading cause of the fluctuations in the condition of many churches. The overhaste for results has begot a ruinous policy. It has left unused the main part of that instrumentality by which the man of God is thoroughly furnished to every good work, and by which the church is prepared to fulfil her destiny. It has rejected the advantage of having public instruction carried forward on broad principles, and rearing a people with clear and decided views of divine truth. It has intrusted the safety and prosperity of the church upon a frail basis, by placing the main stress upon a novel and attractive manner of preaching, without regard to the substance. Hence the frequent changes. A preacher sought for the novelty of his manner, must soon give place to a more novel successor. And popular preachers, as their peculiar talent thrives best by frequent uprooting and transplanting, are in a favorable field to cultivate a still more popu-

lar manner. But that church that has a use for the whole gospel, and seeks to thrive by laying instruction deep in the public conscience, has a motive to deprecate such changes. Such a church wants a pastor who expects to live and die with them, and who, instead of trimming himself for another market, is preaching as a candidate to the rising generation of his own parish, and forming the minds of his young people, to such a clear and copious reception of the truth, that they may come up around him, with clear minds and sanctified hearts, to such positions of influence as only well instructed Christians can hold. The church and ministry that pursues such a policy, escape those occasions of disastrous change, incident to those churches that live or die with the waxing or waning popularity of their preacher.

Our subject gives us a clue to the reason of that morbid state of the public mind, which makes it tinder to every wandering spark of error. The facility with which men, not deficient in mental capacity, take up the crudest absurdities—from the philosophic moonshine of the Pantheists to the vulgar prophecyings and impostures of the Mormonites—is a remarkable feature of the age. And what has caused it? Surely, if we note well the nature of these errors, we shall not consider their ready adoption any compliment to the intelligence of the age; we shall not ascribe them to the march of mind, nor say that our much learning has made us mad. The true cause will doubtless be found in the gradual retrocession of the influence of evangelical doctrines over the mass of mind. It accords with the laws of the human mind, both physical and moral, that these principles of the divine government shall be indispensable to its regulation. A failure to hold vigorously forth the great doctrines of grace, which had begun before the days of Edwards and Whitefield, let in a flood of Arminianism. The next natural step of departure developed Unitarianism. And the diffusion of the

principles and spirit of these two systems, as far as they went, bereft the mind of rudder and compass, and left it the sport of casual winds. And the state of Unitarianism at this moment, affords an affecting illustration of the results of cutting loose from the doctrines of the cross. Smitten with the disease called transcendentalism, many of its leading minds are found wandering about in the ultima thule of error, otherwise called "the latest form of infidelity," and answering most fitly to this description of the prophet—"Stay yourselves and wonder, cry ye out and cry, they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink: for the Lord hath poured out upon them a spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed their eyes; their prophets and their rulers, and their seers hath it covered."

The same cause, throwing mind from its moorings, has begotten nameless empirical theories, and principles of benevolent action, which have thrown jars and impediments in the way of Christian benevolence, and which have arrayed a spurious philanthropy in a warfare against the settled institutions of Christianity. Here we see the fruits of being wise above what is written, and of departing from a vigorous use of the great doctrines of grace. Such crudities were never conceived in minds that had been penetrated by the humbling doctrines of the cross. We may contrast the present prevalence of error, with the sway of truth in the palmier days of the New England church, and trace the main deterioration, to the pulpit's failure to give a certain sound, when a faithful enunciation of the doctrines of grace, would have been to the public mind an anchor, sure and steadfast. From generation to generation, the pulpit has made concessions to the spirit and demands of error, and forborne to hold forth those points of God's truth that are offensive to the carnal mind, and expected that a gospel thus shorn of its strength, would still continue to do a gospel's work. But it was

like taking away the bones, muscles, and soul of a man, and continuing the demand of labor from him. It was to be expected that, so far as the public mind should set aside those great principles of God's government over mind, place would be given for those preachers of civil and ecclesiastical anarchy, who are now demanding the prostration of all order, and who, under pretence of a freer and holier gospel, are crying against every gospel institution, "Rase it—rase it to the foundation thereof." God has let in upon us just enough of this thing, to show us where this course of temporizing would end, and then mercifully restrained the remainder, so as to give us opportunity to retrace our steps and to ask for the old paths.

The causes of this decline of doctrinal preaching, are so multiplied, that the remedy must embrace many particulars, and its application is the concern of every minister and Christian; and it is the solemn duty of every one to stand in his lot, and encourage and sustain a more full and earnest inculcation of the strong doctrines of the gospel. I know it is a thankless work. Popular favor is gained by sailing smoothly along the popular currents, and not by counterworking them. Yet Christian ministers are supposed to regard their obligations to God, and to the welfare of a dying world, and when occasion requires, to make a stand for truth against the good pleasure of men, and against all vitiating tendencies of the public mind. God said to his ministry of old, "See, I have set thee over the nations to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy, to build and to plant." The building of the spiritual temple requires the demolishing of opposing structures. And the planting of the garden of the Lord is not well done, without the plucking up of noxious plants. And though this part of the work should require self-denials, who are we that we should decline it?

When the interests of Christian truth are at stake, it is



no time to take counsel of our fears, and shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God. If the cause of Christ in any place will suffer, by declaring the whole truth as it is in Jesus, let it suffer. He will see to it. If speaking the truth in love, in faithfulness and prayer, will ruin the cause of truth, let it go to ruin. The same means will lift it up again, and bring it forth to a more broad and finished glory.



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# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN BOSTON BEFORE

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## THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATION

OF

### CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS IN MASSACHUSETTS,

MAY 28, 1844.

BY

EDWARDS A. PARK,

BARTLET PROFESSOR IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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## P R E F A C E .

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WHEN the following discourse was preached, it was not the author's intention to publish it in its present form nor at the present time ; but as it was requested for the press by the Pastoral Association, and as many erroneous reports have been circulated concerning it, the author was induced to change his original purpose, and give the sermon, without any important alteration, to the public. He has been accused of making, in the discourse, an attack upon a Christian sect ; but he considered himself as speaking in the defensive, and as aiming to expose a peculiar system of sectarian encroachment, the successes of which have been the occasion of frequent triumph to those who have pursued it. He could not advocate the proper spirit of liberality among good men, without censuring that narrow policy which cultivates the zeal of a partizan more than the temper of a Christian, and inspires a greater love for sectarian distinctions than for evangelical doctrine. He has been also accused of exalting subordinate considerations to the place of essential truths ; whereas it was his primary aim to dissuade men from all inclination to regard the polity and forms of the church, as a matter of paramount concern. He has been complained of as making no distinction between the evangelical members of an honored sect, and the semi-Romanists with whom they are ecclesiastically united ; but he designed to have no controversy with those evangelical Christians who are struggling against the intrinsic evils of their church organization. He holds those worthy men in high esteem, and regrets the necessity of believing, that their laudable aims will be eventually thwarted by the inherent tendencies of their church. He delights in their virtues, but laments that their position is so unfortunate, and he cannot repress a desire that they may abandon the system which prevents their fellowship with other evangelical denominations. No one can entertain other feelings than those of reverence for William Wilberforce, but when we read the letter in which he reproved a

friend for venturing into a dissenter's meeting-house, where the gospel was to be preached by Robert Hall, we cannot but mourn that so amiable a philanthropist should allow a consideration of policy to interfere with the higher claims of christian charity. The conduct of such men is not so blamable, as their position is unhappy ; we often venerate their character, while we regret the constraint in which circumstances have placed them. It has been objected to the discourse, that it does not canvass the arguments drawn from Scripture and tradition in favor of Episcopacy ; but it may be said in answer, that the whole subject of Episcopacy is introduced only as an *illustration* of the principal theme of remark ; it is considered *incidentally* and in only a few of its relations. It may be also replied, that only those claims of Episcopacy are alluded to which, *in point of fact*, are found to have most influence over the common mind. It is not the biblical nor the historical argument which operates most effectively in favor of the Episcopal church ; it is the stateliness of its government, and the alleged gracefulness of its forms. Hence it is of practical importance to inquire, whether more simplicity in the organization, and a purer taste in the ceremonial of that church, would not advance the public good. It has further been objected to the discourse, that it is not written in a style appropriate to the pulpit. It were indeed undesirable to adopt all the phraseology of the sermon for a Sabbath exercise, but as the sermon was not preached on the Sabbath, and as some of the ceremonies, to which it alludes, are not fitted of themselves to suggest a very elevated diction, the author felt himself justified in employing such phrases as were an honest and natural expression of his ideas. He has taken no pains to force his style out of a reasonable fitness to his subject. He hopes that the many faults of the sermon may be forgiven, that it may not be regarded as a *merely controversial* essay, and that it may be of some little service in cherishing among its readers a preference for the masculine character and thoughtfulness of our Puritan ancestors, above the affected tastes and growing sentimentalism of modern times.

# DISCOURSE.

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MATTHEW 5: 13—16.

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH: BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS SAVOR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING, BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN. YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY THAT IS SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HID. NEITHER DO MEN LIGHT A CANDLE, AND PUT IT UNDER A BUSHEL, BUT ON A CANDLESTICK, AND IT GIVETH LIGHT UNTO ALL THAT ARE IN THE HOUSE. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.

PRIVATE Christians sustain a peculiar relation to their fellow men. From this relation result peculiar duties, duties to themselves, to the world, to the Creator. If christian laymen are under these especial obligations, much more are their religious teachers. In a preëminent sense are the ministers of the gospel “the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.” As they are subjected in all lands to greater responsibilities than other men, so are they subjected to very peculiar responsibilities in our own land, and especially in the home of the Puritans. The Ministers of New England are, with an emphasis, required to shine as lights in the world. The causes of this responsibility are various and easily seen. But without detaining you with any further introduction, I will proceed at once to the subject of this discourse, and request you to consider *some of the peculiar duties which are incumbent on the New England Clergy.*

In the first place, it is especially incumbent on the

ministers of New England, to be circumspect in their treatment of the laity. History proves that it is often not safe to confide the interests of evangelical truth with church officers, when they are independent of private Christians. Hence it is that the ecclesiastical organization which we have received from our fathers, manifests a peculiar deference for laymen. It demands of them more intelligence and weight of character than are required of laymen in most other communities. The supply is equal to the demand. Because our private Christians are well disciplined in practical theology, well prepared to discover the general import of a religious system, we are accustomed to give them peculiar marks of our regard and confidence. But they must not thence be flattered into an overweening estimate of their capabilities, nor imagine that they are as competent to pronounce a decision on the philosophical theories as on the doctrinal truths of theology. There are disputes pertaining to the nature of will, to the relations of sin, which try the sagacity of the most sharp-sighted philosophers, and on which we should not invite the mechanic and the ploughman to pass a dogmatical decision. We should conduct our scholastic disputes in a scholastic way, and we do a wrong to our own minds, when we carry our scientific difficulties down to the arena of popular dissension. There is danger that ministers in a republic will be so much interested in practical services among the people, as to neglect the scientific study of theological systems. Hence has it been predicted, that sacred learning would never flourish under our popular institutions. This makes it the more needful for us to raise our critical and philosophical discussions above the tribunal of men and women who are unversed in the ancient languages and but little skilled in nicely drawn distinctions, and to lay our dubious questionings before the bench of large-minded



and high-souled scholars, who have their senses exercised to distinguish between things that differ. The fact that our people are so untrammelled in thought and in speech, so excitable also in their temperament, is an additional reason for guarding them against activity in controversies which are too recondite for their apprehension. The mass of men will not give heed to the idea of these controversies, but will be agitated by the bare words, and truth and justice will be trampled down under the jealousies that come from obnoxious phrases. The terms Fatalist, Antinomian, Pelagian, semi-Pelagian, will often excite a prejudice which no argument or even Result of Council will allay; and the laymen in a free community should not hear these epithets applied to their pastors, unless there be indisputable evidence that such opprobrium is deserved. When the Rationalists of Halle desired to excite the popular resentment against Prof. Tholuck, they dropped a few significant words, which fell like sparks of fire upon gunpowder. The community were inflamed, and the evangelical divine was saved from their indignation by the civil authorities. Very seldom, however, can a minister in New England shield himself against a vulgar prejudice by the interposition of government. He falls a sacrifice to the jealousies of the people. They are often needless jealousies; for the people are exercising their sovereignty on themes too deep, too high, too narrow, too broad for their researches. They are often hurtful jealousies; for the cause of truth is injured when discussions, eluding the acumen of long practised thinkers, are despatched by an outcry of the multitude. It is not implied, not by any means, that we should neglect to interest the members of our churches in theological controversy. In many of our investigations we need the aid of that sound and sterling sense which characterizes our laymen; but while we invite

them to discuss a theological doctrine, we need not make them partisans for this or that philosophical analysis of its relations. Such philosophical analysis presupposes a scientific discipline in him who attempts it. It is indispensable for clergymen who would be masters of their profession. It should *distinguish* them from those whom they instruct, should help to make them "a chosen generation," "a peculiar" class, "a royal priesthood." And before we confound all distinction, in this regard, between the minister and the layman, before we make the mass of the people umpires in strictly metaphysical disputes, before we abandon all parts of theological science which are not congenial with the popular taste, we do well to be circumspect. We should remember that in our land the clergymen who are supported by the people, must in a measure supply the place of the professed theologians in Europe, who are supported by the State; must be the guardians and standard-bearers of truth; must attempt the rare union of a studious habit with practical wisdom.

In the second place, it is an especial duty of the ministers of New England, to make no conditions of church fellowship, which are not essential constituents of christian character. We are required to maintain the whole truth, but not to imagine that all which is true is indispensable to the religious life. We are bound to reverence the entire system of theology, but we are prone to overrate those parts of it on which we contend. The very fact that we prolong our meditation upon those parts, induces us to magnify their importance. Things are large or small by comparison, and when we confine our gaze to the mint and anise, we have no opportunity to contrast them with the greater matters of the law. The very circumstance, also, that we are in conflict about a mere *nice-ty*, is apt to irritate the mind, and hence our zeal in the

contest is often in inverse proportion to the magnitude of its object. We come, too, so often in contact with the men from whom we differ in only a few particulars, that the themes of our dissension are kept fresh in remembrance ; our pride of opinion and love of our own way are incessantly provoked, and our controversy becomes like the strife between family friends, more acrimonious than a dispute between strangers. But how strongly soever we may be tempted to make a mere *shibboleth* the condition of christian fellowship, we must remember that a new country is no place for so narrow a sectarianism. We need all the strength of good men in league against the common foe, and are bound to commune with all parties who, loving their Lord supremely, love their neighbors as themselves. This is a land abounding with sects ; in no other country on earth are so many divisions in the church ; hence is it our wisdom to fraternize with all who are the children of our common Father. The spirit of our national institutions is that of liberty and equality ; no one man, no one body of men is allowed to monopolize the favors of providence, nor should any one urge exclusive claims to the treasures of grace. The genius too of the ecclesiastical polity which prevails in New England, is liberal and generous. It requires indeed that every man think aright, but that he think for himself, that he be an Independent in the formation of his opinions, and that he offer the right hand of fellowship to all who love the essentials of the gospel. Hence we are bound by no creed, save that which every church sees fit to make for itself. This is our prerogative, this our high distinction above the dominant sects of the old world, that no council of Nice or of Trent, no synod of Dort, no Assembly at Westminster or at Savoy,\* have any more authority over us

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\* There is probably not a single Congregational divine, who is in fellowship with the orthodox churches of New England, who does not

than we deem it good to allow. With a great sum have others sought to gain this freedom, but we are free born. Therefore is it our birth-right to distinguish between an important truth and an essential one; to commune with our brethren who agree with us in "substance of doctrine," although they may differ from us in theories and forms. We stand on a platform long enough and broad enough to hold all the parties and schools that love our Lord Jesus Christ; and let them stand by our side, they with us, and we with them, for blessed are all they that agree in the one thing needful. Does a man believe that in a metaphysical point of duration, not appreciable by the calculator of time, the human will is in a state of transition from wrong to right, and therefore not exactly determined for sin or for holiness? Let him be welcomed upon our platform, provided that his own will has passed over this hair-breadth line of suspended morality, and become decided for God. Does he believe that sin is necessary or unnecessary for the highest good, that it can be prevented or cannot be prevented by a power extraneous to the created system in which it is committed? Still, if the theorist be striving to prevent sin in his own heart, let him sit down with us in our heavenly places. Does he fail to believe in election? We are sorry, but if he

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give his sanction to the main import of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, and at the same time feel himself at liberty to discard some of its peculiar phrases. Upon the question, what are the essential, and what the subordinate portions of christian doctrine, few evangelical theologians would differ among themselves. Nearly all, for example, would dissent from the Oxford writers, who condemn the Presbyterians, Independents and Methodists, as "not receiving the truth respecting the doctrine of 'laying on of hands,' which St. Paul classes among the fundamental doctrines of Christianity," Heb. 6: 2. They also condemn the Baptists, "who have departed from the truth not only as concerns the doctrine of 'laying on of hands,' but also as concerning the doctrine of baptism, another of the fundamental doctrines according to St. Paul;" *Tract, No. 36, p. 4.*

give evidence that he is elected to holiness, let him come, and we will rejoice over him as one ordained to eternal life, though he himself knoweth it not. Does he reject the doctrine of the saints' perseverance? We lament his error, but let him come and we will strive to keep him from falling. Does he believe in immersion as the exclusive mode of baptism? Let him sit with us at our table, and we will give him of our bread; we concede nothing in giving it, for we adopt the principle that "*our* table," is the table of the Lord, and should be open to all his children. Does he believe in the imposition of a bishop's hands, as the only valid mode of ordination? Let him be invited to our feast of love; we will gird the linen towel around us and wash his feet. We make no concession in performing this act of service; he makes the only concession in allowing us, plebeians as we are so often called, to touch his feet with our unanointed hands. He may be a "taste man" or a man of no taste; an "exercise man" or a man of but little exercise; he may have some ability or nothing but inability, and that by nature; he may be a sinner before he has sinned, or not until he has begun to sin; he may multiply his praises of the prayer-book, or he may esteem the Bible as far better than that; whatever he believes, if he adopt no fundamental error, whatever he rejects, if he discard no fundamental truth, and if his heart be in unison with the essential spirit of the gospel, then is he a Congregational Christian, and will unite with us in the congregation of the redeemed. This is American Christianity. It is in sympathy with the broadness of our lakes, the expanse of our prairies, the length of our rivers, the freeness of our government, the very genius of our whole social organization. A narrow-minded religionist is no true countryman of ours.

In the third place, it is an especial duty of the ministers of New England, to dispense with all needless ma-

chinery of government in the church. It is not said that we must dispense with all government, but with all unnecessary government. The control of God over the physical universe is never ostentatiously displayed. We hear no friction in the machinery of day and night, the stars move silent in their courses. The management of the moral world is equally free from noise and parade. We are governed by conscience, and in yielding to the mandates of heaven, we yield to the principle of reason within ourselves. Our all wise Father has written for us a few general principles of duty, but has left them to be explained by our moral judgment, which would deny its very nature if it should make an unreasonable exaction. Thus does the divine government cherish in the governed a sense of rational accountability, and elevate obedience into the most manly of the virtues. In this respect systems of human legislation should be modelled after the divine. Laws should be so framed as to harmonize with our moral nature, they should be and seem to be needful, not made to display the greatness of the few but to aid the conscience of the many, and to foster the habit of yielding a private to a public good. So may the government of a family or a State be a preparative for the moral dominion of Jehovah. If the citizen be not hampered with arbitrary laws, disgusted with a parade of supremacy, weighed down with too cumbrous a machinery of offices and honors, he may be predisposed by obedience to man for a true submission to God.

Now the government of a church should be in a peculiar measure like that of heaven. It should be a real government, but should be well suited to the necessities of the times. There must be ecclesiastical laws, but they ought to be in harmony with an enlightened conscience. They ought to facilitate rather than supersede the moral judgment of the people. The members of our



churches are supposed to be intelligent, they are supposed to be ransomed from the bondage of sin. Now we know that as knowledge is increased among good men, as piety is increased among educated men, the need of multiplying specific statutes is lessened. The rubrics of certain denominations among us were written for places, where there was no line drawn between the men who served God, and the men who served him not; where laymen were neither instructed nor interested in the government of the church; where clergymen were the police of the State. Such laws were not made for righteous men, nor should they now be retained by free men in Christ Jesus. Further, the members of our churches profess allegiance to the will of heaven, and where the hand of human office-bearers is thrust forward too boldly and too visibly, it attracts to itself the attention which ought to have been paid to a higher authority. Thousands and tens of thousands are yielding to hierarchs the homage which they are bound to reserve for the chief bishop of their souls. Moreover, the members of a true church are in a school of self-discipline. That it should be such a school was the intention of its Founder. For this reason has he given so little prominence to ecclesiastical laws and offices, so little direction with regard to the polity which we should adopt. He designed that his disciples should respect an office, but respect moral worth more; that they should be influenced by virtue more than by power; that they should rule over their own spirits rather than appoint another man to be the keeper of their consciences; that they should study the Scriptures for themselves and work out their own salvation, rather than lie at the door of cardinals or listen to the whispers of a confessor. A school of self-discipline is the church, and therefore is its organization so simple that every member may feel himself in immediate con-

tact with his divine Law-giver. It was one great object of the incarnation, to abridge the seeming distance between the Deity and his children, to bring them into a nearness with him; and the church was so organized as to carry forward this object, to nourish the feeling of responsibility to the unseen God, and cast into the shade all such earthly dignities as intercept the effulgence of the heavenly. Some laws and some offices we must have in the church; but when we see the phalanx of clerks and wardens, curates and prebendaries, deans, deacons, archdeacons, bishops, archbishops, lords spiritual, and spiritual courts, we almost lose sight of him who said, "Be not many masters." Secularized almost of necessity will the church become, if she make her officers and her rubrics so conspicuous as to call away the thoughts from her only master; if she place her government like a wall of partition between the Redeemer and the disciples who are one with him, and who should live in close proximity to him. When hierarchs have abounded, the church has ever been unmindful of her spiritual relations. The laity have been debased by surrendering too many of their rights. The clergy have been inflated by receiving too much obeisance. Man may bear with some meekness the honors of a chancellor or a senator, but when he is saluted with the titles, Right Reverend, His Grace, His Holiness, Father in God, The Head of the church, he is in danger of the harm which our Saviour foresaw when he said, "Be not ye called Rabbi." There is no elevation which makes the exalted one so soon giddy, as that of an ecclesiastical dictator. Man was not made to be a lord over the souls of his fellow men. He is not fitted to bear any greater authority in the church than that of a minister of the gospel.

It is then an imperative duty of clergymen, to discountenance all excess of government among christian brethren.

ren. This is the special duty of ministers in New England. In Europe nearly everything is done *for* the people; but with us nearly all is done *by* them. The ecclesiastics of the old world feel that they have a prescriptive right to retain their fellow Christians in bondage. But we have begun existence anew, far away from the establishments of other lands, unfettered by the customs of feudal times. In Europe, the despotism of the civil government lends important aid to that of the ecclesiastical. Men are so educated in the State as to be easily domineered over in the Church, and so disciplined in the Church as to become fit instruments of oppression in the State. But our citizens are not so carefully fitted in their civil training for much display of human authority in the house of God. When they bestow a high discretionary power upon a magistrate, they are jealous of its abuse, they circumscribe him with conditional and advisory resolves, make him accountable to his constituents, and cleave to the principle of rotation in office. An irresponsible life-bishopric may be congenial with transatlantic institutions, but is not with American. When we were colonies of Britain, she sent her agents hither for the purpose of securing the abolition of our ecclesiastical polity, and introducing a more authoritative and ostentatious government. She rightly judged that our simple and modest organization was not in keeping with the principles of a monarchy. If then we prize our national government, we must love that form of ecclesiastical discipline which is harmonious with it; which gave an early, strong impulse to it. It is an historical fact, that the polity of our churches had a perceptible influence in suggesting the framework of our civil constitution. In return for what it has given us of political good, it demands our support. The ecclesiastical policy of the New Testament is, that we pursue our sacred calling in

harmony with the political institutions of the land in which we reside, and therefore a monarchical government in the church must be modified in a republic. It may be easier for us to dwell under a system that shall give more power to the clergy and less to the people, but we were not born for consulting our ease, and although an anti-republican government may save us from much labor, still it is not fitted to evangelize a free people. We may live more placidly, if we can suppress the voice of laymen, and become responsible to none but dignitaries of the church; but the great majority of our thinking fellow citizens will not long submit to hierarchic pretensions; and it is therefore unwise to sacrifice an evangelical influence over them to the mere quiet of living under a bench of bishops or cardinals. We must not shrink away from hard service, and lay down our heads upon the lap of an aristocratic church-polity. As descendants of the Puritans we are often charged with *radicalism*, and some of our brethren who thus assail us appropriate to themselves the title of *conservative*. But the true conservatism of New England is, to keep a fast hold of those principles which are inwrought into the warp and woof of our political system; and where is radicalism if not in attempting to eradicate the ecclesiastical polity which for more than two hundred years has been growing with our growth and intertwining itself with the character of our people. Where is the disorganizing spirit and the far-famed sin of schism,\* if not

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\* We by no means intend to say, that the sin of schism is chargeable upon opposers of the ecclesiastical polity which prevails in New England. We simply mean, that they who oppose this polity are in some respects more obnoxious to the charge, than those who cleave to the institutions of their fathers. We are aware, however, that the phrase "sin of schism" is seldom used except as designating the character of non-conformity to a prelatical government. Even the bishop of Vermont writes thus: "We cannot regard the non-

in attempting to extirpate the usages of our Pilgrim fathers, men who were as well qualified by nature, as well fitted by intellectual and moral discipline to lay the foundations of an apostolical church, as uninspired men ever were, or perhaps can be expected ever to be. The citizens of some States follow in the footsteps of their fathers from the mere influence of veneration for the past. We should gather around the religious institutions of our Puritan ancestry, because they are in the spirit of the New Testament; because they are the most venerable of all our institutions; because they are homogeneous with our national character; because, when they fall, one prop of our civil liberties will fall with them. Fifteen years since, many persons were anti-prelatical in their views of the church, and republican in their views of the State, who are now the advocates of a semi-papal discipline in the one, and of monarchy in the other. This connection between freedom in sacred things, and freedom in civil, is well understood by transatlantic observers of our republican experiment. They are predicting, that the rapid influx of papal religionists among us will impair our political immunities. They utter their dark forebodings, when they hear that some of our intelligent laymen are beginning to rejoice in the writings of bishop Laud; and when they can be made to credit the rumor that sixty American clergymen, freeborn and freebred, have kneeled down in bodily presence at the feet of a bishop in New York, they will marvel that the change is come so soon upon us, and will cry out, How

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episcopal ministry as men regularly ordained, but rather as laymen, exercising ministerial functions according to a rule of human, instead of divine; of modern, instead of apostolic institution. Hence their baptisms are lay baptisms. They are also liable to the charge of schism, and are not free from the more grievous infection of heresy."

—*The novelties which disturb our Peace*, pp. 51, 52.

art thou fallen, Lucifer, Son of the morning, and become *as one of us!*

In the fourth place, it is an especial duty of the ministers of New England, to preserve simplicity in their mode of divine worship. This is an important duty, though not essential to the maintenance of a christian character. There must be some forms of worship. They should not, however, be artificial, but such as the nature of worship suggests. They should not be excessive in number, but confined within certain limits. Symbols of truth may be used to arrest the attention; but, if they be inappropriate, they will engross the attention. They may be used to vivify the sentiment; but if they be improper, they will satisfy the mind with merely natural sentiment. Inapposite symbols are as hurtful, as the fitting symbols are beneficial. Whenever religious forms are more numerous than the prevailing usages of society require, they will be used by the people as a telescope is used by a child, as something to be played with rather than looked through. Opposed by nature to the contemplation of sacred doctrine, we often confine our gaze to the visible observances, and will not cast an eye behind them to the idea which they represent. The design of these rites is to shadow forth a principle, but the mind lingers among the shadows, and is glad of an excuse for neglecting the substance.—Hence results another evil of excessive formality in worship. It tends to confound all distinction of moral character. It affects the amiable instincts, and man is ever ready to mistake the effervescence of animal sensibility for the deeper outflow of holy emotion. We often hear that the feeling of reverence is promoted by the Romish ceremonies, but some men are satisfied if they revere a temple of worship, while they have no veneration for the converted soul of a Protestant, which is a temple of the living God. They hope for salvation, be-



cause they are filled with awe when they see a relic of the true cross, even if they have no respect for the humility and the meekness which are the substantial relics of the Saviour. The tracts of the Oxford divines are famed for the spirit of reverence which they breathe; but it is a deceptive reverence, for it is always more conspicuous in view of an outward observance in the church, than in view of a moral excellence out of it. Men are flattered by garnishing the sepulchre of a canonized patron, but learn their true character from the spiritual teachings of Jesus. The worshippers in a Roman cathedral are entranced by their bands of music, and fascinated with the vestments of their clergy, they become zealots for their church, will lay down their life for it, but see no dividing line between the men who are lovers of pleasure, and the men who are lovers of God. All are on the Lord's side in their own esteem, because all are dazzled with the ceremonial at the altar, and feel no interest in that truth which severs the righteous from the wicked. But where the minister disdains to enrobe himself in garments spangled with gold-thread, where he holds up and urges forward the discriminating doctrines of the gospel, there the friends of the truth become a peculiar people, and the scriptural theory is developed of "one taken and another left." A man may be regenerated by the instrumentality of a Madonna of Raphael, but there is far more likelihood of his being engrossed with the softness of the coloring and the loveliness of the form, and of his mistaking the delights of an amateur for the complacency of a spiritual worshipper. The winning child, smiling in the arms of its virgin mother, may call forth a tear even from the eye of a Borgia, but this child is not painted "for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The veil of excessive for-

mularies must be taken away from the eyes of a people, or they will not see clearly those principles which "try every man's work of what sort it is."

Still another evil of excessive forms is, that they degrade the dignity of worship. True dignity does not consist in pomp and glitter, but in expressions of greatness of soul, of solemn thought, of communion with God. When we notice much regard to dress and etiquette in a preacher, we feel that he has descended from the spirituality of his calling. He should enter the sanctuary as one bowed down under the weight of his message, as one who has spent his Sabbath morning in converse with Jehovah and with truth. This is the dignity of his great office, this the form, this the rite, this the symbol which he should display,—an abstractedness from all considerations of his own person. When, therefore, he is ushered into the sanctuary arrayed in white robes that cover a rich drapery of silks, we fear that he has just come, not from the scene of self-abasement and self-distrust, but from the toilette and the mirror;—we may hope that it is not so, but the *appearances* are unfavorable to our hope;—he makes a promenade to and fro before the spectators, not for the *purpose*, we trust, but with the *consequence* of securing their admiration for the fine linen and graceful embroidery with which he is adorned. So likewise, when he goes out from the worship in which his people are engaged, and retires to the vestry for the purpose of making another change in his elegant apparel, and when he again presents himself clad in the flowing sable, he seems to degrade the spirituality of his calling in thus interrupting his hour of devotion with the adjustment and then the readjustment of the delicate folds and the broad phylacteries. All this form and circumstance is said to be a symbol of truth; but the preacher would exhibit a fitter symbol, if he would remain with the worshippers in the

act of adoration, rather than leave them for a new ornamenting of the person. It is said to be an ancient symbol; but one yet more ancient is, that the man of God commune with his own heart and *be still*; that he practise no disfiguring of the face or of the body, *so as to be seen of men*. The whiteness of the surplice is said to be a symbol of purity, but our Saviour proposed a more modest sign of purity in the command, "When thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face," that is, make no artificial display, "that thou appear not unto men to fast."\* When once the mind of the clergy takes the direction of fondness for artificial forms and symbols, it is apt to find no stopping-place until it hides the truth itself under the emblems of it. This direction of the mind has a tendency, not always the actual effect, but a *tendency* to make the religious character of the people superficial, and their worship a shallow observance of beautiful rites. It is a most unfortunate direction of the mind, for it leads to trivial discussions of which there is no end. The gilded robes of the Catholic priest denote the richness of the gospel, their brilliancy denotes the radiance of truth, their fulness denotes the affluence of grace; but who looks upon these robes, with all their alleged significancy, as anything more than puerile inventions, which every church will multiply just in proportion to its want of a manly faith? We are far from saying that the men who adopt such puerilities are themselves deficient in dignity of character, we only say that their costumes are incongruous with the highest dignity of worship.

Hence comes still another evil of excess in the formal-

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\* Is it easy to conceive of so dignified a preacher as our Saviour, or Peter, or Paul, in the act of abandoning public worship for the simple purpose of varying the elegances of his official garb? And if the Apostolic example be considered as having no authority over us in this particular, does it not suggest one of the canons of a good taste?

ities of the sanctuary. It repels the better order of mind. Such mind loves to grapple with thought in the house of God, to feel the pressure of doctrine, and it will turn away from the surplus of artificial observances. Children are satisfied with mere pictures, but men put away childish things. Before the general prevalence of education, outward symbols were a substitute for more definite teaching; but since books have become accessible to all, a more intellectual style of worship is needful for sound minds. One reason why the pulpit of continental Europe exerts so little influence over well instructed men is, that it makes so many appeals to sense, and so few to the intellect. It is modelled, this is the general fact, after the pulpit of the dark ages, assumes that men will not exert their mental powers in worship, and is therefore adapted to the taste of the unthinking. The same routine of prayers has been repeated so often, as to have lost its meaning; the same genuflections, signs of the cross, and responses have confirmed such a monotony of service as to leave the mind of the worshipper inert. Hence an intelligent citizen is seldom found in the church. He deems it a waste of time to watch these outward bodyings-forth of thought, and goes elsewhere in quest of thought itself.

Such being the influence of excessive forms in worship, they should be avoided by all preachers, especially by those who minister in a land of republican simplicity. The genius of a popular government is that of plain rites. It is the aristocracy and the peasantry who love ostentatious observances; but we have not much of either a recognized aristocracy or of a peasantry. In Europe every petty officer of the crown wears his badge of distinction. The president of our Union, in all his glory, was never clothed in so shining raiment as the livery servant of a Lord Mayor in London. Where the love of

tinsel is fostered by the rulers, it is not so wonderful that it should be imbibed by the priesthood. If the tax-gatherer and the policeman deck themselves out with silver or pewter adornings, then the minister feels obliged to appear equal at least to the other officers of State, and to make an impression on the multitude by the paraphernalia of dress. It is the prerogative of our republic to have freed herself from this love of official trappings. Our high functionaries are expected to wear the badge of a strong mind and honest heart, but to live superior to the outward adorning of the putting on of apparel. Let it not be said then, that our ministers at the altar are the last, who will give up those prettinesses of attire which are so apt to make even ministers too well satisfied with themselves; the last who will cling to personal ornaments other than those which come from a meek and quiet spirit. If a clergyman prefer to wear some plain insignia of office, we would not be strenuous in opposing him. By no means. We insist only on this, that the clerical badge of distinction, if there be any, shall attract no regard to its own exquisiteness or impropriety, that it shall administer no flattery to the wearer, and awaken no suspicion that he walketh in a vain show. It should not be designed to impart an artificial beauty to the preacher, but to increase the expressiveness of his gestures and the silent eloquence of his person. The same professional garb which adorns the clergy of other lands, is even more ostentatious with us than with them; for it is more of a departure from our prevalent tastes. The ritual of certain foreign churches would never have been devised, if foreign nations were like our own; and it cannot now be retained among us, without an appearance of eccentricity which ministers to pride. Whenever a sect distinguishes itself from others by a splendid ceremonial, it is apt to over-value itself, and to under-



value its neighbors. Its artificial elegances separate it from less fashionable denominations, and flatter it into an arrogant and exclusive spirit which is not republican. We believe that even good men are easily betrayed into foibles, of which it were wise to avoid even the appearance; and therefore we look with a suspicious eye upon all those changes of raiment, which are symbols of an undue esteem for finery and parade. When we see the governors of our States, the judges of our courts, the president of our great republic, discharging their duties in the simple habiliments of men, then we feel that inward worth and official dignity are lifted up above the need of personal decorations; but when we see a beautiful young minister at the altar magnified with capacious robes, as white as the lily of the valley, and setting off in fine relief the damask of the human cheek, we have an instinctive fear that certain sidelong influences will steal in upon him, and will so transform his character, that in process of time it will be said, "If the clerical estate of man be his best estate, then verily, man in his best estate is altogether vanity."

In the fifth place, it is an especial duty of ministers in New England, to make the doctrines of the gospel prominent above all things else, and to bring them into immediate contact with the mind and heart of man. This degree of prominence must be given to doctrine, not chiefly for its own sake, but for the sake of eliciting holy affection, of imparting the spirit of worship; for all worship is spurious that is not inspired by the truth of God. It is often asked, what is the criterion of simplicity in the outward observances of the church? What constitutes an excess of rites? One answer to this question is, they are excessive and improper when they assume a prominence above evangelical doctrine, when they attract notice to themselves and divert the mind from the



faith once delivered to the saints. They will always stand between the object of faith and the eye of the believer, when they are not the natural, and spontaneous suggestions of feeling, but are *sought out* and coolly contrived by art. External rites are like glass, the great excellence of which is, that it be perspicuous, that we may look easily and at once through it to the things that lie behind it. In one church the glass is concave and makes the thoughts of a sermon appear less than they are; in another church it is convex and makes the ideas appear greater than they are; in one it is colored, yellow, green, or blue, and makes the doctrine appear unnatural; in another it is prismatic, and multiplies the sentiment into numerous small images, all tinged with the hues of the rainbow; but that glass is the best which the worshippers look through, without thinking of it, but seeing clearly, and just as they are, the thoughts that are beyond it. That order of the church is the proper one, which disposes men to earnest meditation, which causes men to feel the weight of truth and lie humbled under it; and that order is an unworthy one, which occupies the popular mind with deaneries and bishoprics, Michaelmas and Epiphanies, St. John's days and St. Stephen's days. If a preacher wish to present the doctrine of divine sovereignty to his hearers, he must let this truth pervade all the exercises of the Sabbath, his prayers must develop the influence of it on his own mind, the hymns which he reads must breathe the spirit of it, he must be and must appear to be, living in the truth which he cannot but speak. Thus will an appropriateness be given to every service; and every Sabbath will present some new and fresh stimulus to devotion. But if he be obliged to consume a portion of his Sabbath hours in decking himself with feminine drapery of divers colors, and then to read through a long series of disconnected and heterogeneous

prayers, some of them beautiful and others not, some of them suited to the present age, and others not, to repeat lessons of Scripture that relate to widely different subjects, and all of them foreign from the subject of his discourse, and if at the end of this fragmentary and desultory and protracted ritual, he attempt the proof of his doctrine, he will find his own spirit ill-prepared for so manly a work, the minds of his audience ill-disposed for solid argument, his sermon must be brief, there is great danger that it will be superficial, and that he will leave his hearers to meditate not on the theme of his discourse but on the propriety of making a bow at the name of Jesus, of looking toward the East at the time of prayer, of the priest's turning his face from the audience as he stands at the altar, of the sign of the cross in baptism, of burning candles at the eucharist. But where is the sovereignty of God? Where the onset upon the conscience? Where the truth that awes down the spirit, and indisposes it for questions of etiquette? Where the doctrine that searcheth the hidden things of the heart, and purifieth it like a refiner's fire? "Is not my word like a hammer, saith the Lord."

It is inwrought in the constitution of the mind, that if a preacher would make his hearers feel the power of truth, he must present it to them in its naked, simple purity, must fix their attention upon it, allow no artifice of fashion to intervene between it and them, no confusion of prayers, no inappropriateness of responses, no vain repeating of the same words, no antiquated and obsolete liturgical phrases; he must secure unity of impression; thought after thought must strike upon one sensibility, until it gives way. The body of a service must bend to the soul of it. The great truth which is proclaimed from the pulpit must inspire the prayers and the praises; must incline the mind to a specific and ap-

propriate tenor of devotion, and the exercises of worship must be a preparative for an earnest and holy converse with that one distinctive truth.\* Hence we find that those churches have been most familiar with religious doctrine, which have suffered no stereotyped formularies to intercept its rightful influence ; which have meditated on divine truth as it was suggested by all-wise Providences, and not as it was forced upon them by an arbitrary service-book. Men have been less thoughtful when the subjects of thought for every Sabbath have been rigidly prescribed by their fathers, than when the exigencies of the day and the Spirit of God have brought all things to their remembrance. Even in our mother-country, where the numbers and the wealth and the universities and the scholarships and the civil power are in favor of the Establishment, still the ablest champions of a spiritual theology, and the men who have given most prominence and directness to the truth, have been those who preached in meeting-houses, but were shut out from

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\* In saying that the Episcopal liturgy, excellent as it is in some respects, ought in other respects to be altered, the author says no more than has been acknowledged by Sancroft, Tenison, Wake, Secker, Porteus, Bloomfield, Whateley, and other prelates of the English Church. It has been recently said by an eminent Episcopalian, in this country, "The single prayer of the Litany, 'O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us, grant us thy peace,' seems itself to outweigh in worth all the formal, theoretical, discursive prayers, we have ever heard from Presbyterians." See Barnes' Reply to Epis. Rec. p. 112. On the other hand the author of "Reminiscences of Robert Hall," says, p. 44, "Dr. Thackeray, who is a churchman, told me that the finest parts in the Liturgy were scarcely to be compared to these prayers," which Mr. Hall offered in the social circle. His public prayers, p. 3, "were highly scriptural and devotional ; they possessed a solemnity which touched every heart, and *prepared the mind for the reception of the sermon.*" The tendency of the Liturgy is in some cases to unfit the mind for a very weighty discourse.

churches. We find, indeed, many venerable names among the English prelates, names which we love to honor, yet there are few who have urged the truth upon the conscience like Owen and Howe and Bates and Baxter and Charnock and Bunyan and Flavel and the Henrys, Watts, Doddridge, Ryland, Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall, and a hundred others who were ministers but not clergymen. History has ever shown that it is far more improving for the officers of a church, to spend their time in studying the oracles of God than in familiarizing themselves with a voluminous ritual; to be qualified for their work by strength of mind and purity of heart, than by a contact of their heads with the hands of a bishop. It is far better for the intellectual and moral character of the young that they be regenerated by the truth, than that they be regenerated by baptism; far more refining and spiritualizing to the communicant, that he hold mental converse with an unseen Saviour, than that he eat and drink the very essence of the eucharist. Everything which brings thought into bold relief, and casts all the fopperies of human contrivance into the shade, conduces to the ennobling of the soul.\*

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\* The silent tendency of the Episcopal church to exalt a mere rite, however important it may be, above the truth and above moral worth which are still more important, may be seen in the beautiful Burial Service. The service is thought by many to imply, that "the deceased brother" is prepared "for the general resurrection and the life of the world to come;" and when the question is asked, who shall be denied the privilege of this solemn burial, the answer is, not he who was flagrantly impure in heart, but he who was "unbaptized;" not he who manifestly *deserved* to be excommunicated, but he who in point of fact *was* excommunicated; not he who has been notoriously dead in trespasses and sins, but he who has "laid violent hands upon himself." What is the influence of allowing a christian burial to a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, if he have only been baptized, and refusing it to virtuous men if they have not received this ordinance? Is excommunication from the church a greater hindrance to

In New England it is emphatically true that principles, fundamental principles, must be made conspicuous in the church. Our citizens must and will have argument to grapple with. They are prepared for truth made prominent. They will not long rest satisfied with similes from the daisy and the tulip and the butterfly. They yearn for thought clearly reasoned out, cogently pressed home. Our clergymen are called to look above the models that are given by the great majority of European preachers, to adopt a more intellectual address, to reason with men, to seize them, to struggle with them, to carry them captive. It is regarded in some parts of Europe as a prodigy, that the systems of our ablest theologians have been preached as popular discourses. Such discourses have contributed to form the character of our people. The character of the people reacts upon the clergy, and demands of them renewed freshness and vigor. Many of the English divines are accustomed to undervalue the preaching of the gospel, and exalt the liturgy far above the homily. But in our young republic, where the national character is in rapid progress of formation, where the popular press is more active than in any other land, where the means of influence are proffered to the bad as well as the good, where the laws will not sustain the church and exempt the pastors from toil, *preaching* "is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation." If this fall, all falls. With us, if God be not worshipped in spirit and in truth, he will not long be worshipped in any manner. In continental Europe the aim of the pulpit is, to make the people contented with what they have; in our country it must

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salvation, than a life of known sinfulness? We rejoice indeed, that the influence of thus unduly magnifying the externals of Christianity is counteracted in so many individual cases, still it is unhappy that there should *be* such an influence, needing to be resisted in order to save the church from formalism.

be, to make them labor for what they have not. There, it is the mission of the preacher to hold the community back; here, he must start them forward, and direct them in their course. Now it requires but little effort, to persuade an audience to do nothing. The labor is, to persuade them to act. This is our labor. Our business is to make the kingdom of heaven suffer violence, and the violent take it by force. Hence must our religious services be characterized by power, that power which comes from the spirit of the gospel rather than from the contrivances of men; by a power which will melt down the heart in contrition rather than fascinate it with a form. Whatever others may do, then, let us *preach*, preach the word, preach it so that men will pray and "sing with the spirit and the understanding also," preach doctrines practically, and explain practice doctrinally; and let the truth with *us* be foremost, let it be uppermost, let it be innermost, let it be outermost; and let us be persuaded that nothing, neither rites nor ceremonies, principalities nor powers in the church, shall be able to separate us from those pure and simple principles which transform worms of the dust into sons of God.

In the sixth place, it is a peculiar duty of the ministers of New England, to make the services of the sanctuary as attractive as they can be made, in consistency with the prominence of Christian doctrine. Some suppose that if artificial attractions be discarded, there will be no attractions left; but it is no less a rule of aesthetics to banish all inapposite beauties, than it is to banish all original deformities. The principle with regard to worship, is the same as that which regulates our style of writing. As all rhetorical ornaments must be dispensed with, which conceal the idea intended to be expressed; so should all allurements be disallowed in the sanctuary, which veil the sentiments appropriate to communion with God. Now



the rule which condemns unnatural embellishments of style, does not forbid such adornings as are suited to the thought ; neither does the rule which condemns an unbecoming decoration of the church-service, forbid such allurements as aid the moral impressiveness of that service. Man has various sensibilities which should be elicited in behalf of religion ; and the love of outward beauty should be appealed to, so far as to allure the mind toward inward excellence, but not so far as to confine the spirit to an admiration of externals. Taste should be a modest servant of devotion, not the master of it. The Catholic church has given to the fine arts a *controlling* power. Her celebrated poets, her magnificent sculptors, her thrilling painters, her refined priests, have united their genius for the perfecting of her external worship. But they have mistaken the true philosophy of worship. Their ceremonies are attractive, but they attract in the wrong direction ; they are alluring, but they allure to the wrong objects. They charm the mind away from meditation on spiritual truth. We admire the Gothic temples of the Romish church, and are filled with awe as we walk amid the massive pillars that stretch upward toward heaven ; as we behold the spires and turrets, that seem to be almost *living*, and striving higher and higher after something above this world. But this is not in good taste for Protestant worship. The majestic chorus that peals through the fretted vaults may thrill the heart ; but faith cometh from the hearing of the gospel, and we must resign the grandeur and sublimity of these marble domes for the higher excellence of fitness to the preaching of the truth of God, and uniting in intelligible prayer. The cathedral is designed for lookers on ; the true christian temple should be constructed for men who take heed how they hear. It is a sad truth, that there is no architectural style, yet discovered, which is in harmony with

Protestant worship. We grieve to say that we have no churches built as the genius of Christianity requires. We wait for a protestant Michael Angelo to study into the genius of the reformed religion, and to body it forth in an edifice which shall be itself a sermon. It should be an edifice, not of perishable wood, but of a material that will endure long after its builders have fallen asleep. It should be so constructed as to connect by-gone with future generations, and to proclaim our simple faith for a thousand years. The spirit of Romanism is now perpetuated by her old massive churches more than by her folios. The very walls of these churches are permeated by the Romish faith, and when they have been delivered over to the service of Protestantism, they have often exerted a silent influence in marring the simplicity of Protestant ceremonies, just as the worship of the Catholics themselves was originally corrupted by the edifices which they received from the Pagans. The genius of our reformed system should be hallowed by such edifices as will not be equally fitted for the rites of a christianized heathenism; by edifices which are symbols of the pureness, the solidity, the sacredness, the spiritual and enduring nature of our faith. A house for the worship of God should exclude the light of the world, and admit only the light from heaven. It should not allow the image of a saint to interfere with the claims of Him who is a Spirit. It should instruct the eye with chaste walls, too rich to be variegated even by a picture, and seeming by their severe simplicity to enclose the spirit of Him who looketh on the heart. It is indeed affecting to behold that most graceful and delicate of all forms, the mother of Jesus, as she stands over the sacristy where sleeps the broken body of her Lord; but during the hour of worship, and in the temple of Jehovah, we may fitly say to this blessed among women the same words which were once spoken

to her by her son, "Woman what have I to do with thee." It is indeed ennobling to behold that most exalted of all figures, the person of our Redeemer, as he stands through the day and livelong night stretching forth his arms to welcome the weary and heavy laden; but he who worships God must *think*,—think of heights and depths and lengths and breadths of grace, and must summon all the energies of his soul to the duty which archangels perform with trembling; and therefore is it more seemly to survey the lineaments of the Son of man at a less imposing hour, when the soul is relaxing itself from its severer duties, and leaning upon the Saviour's bosom. Therefore let the very walls of a church seem to be awe-struck. Let its pillars say to us, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet." Let it favor the abstraction of the mind. Let it invite not to gazing at the right hand or the left, but to contemplation on God. Let everything be massive rather than gaudy, solid rather than fanciful. Let there be no inconvenience, no ungracefulness, no ugliness which may annoy the worshipper. Let it be neat and unspotted, even a symbol of the purity of heaven. Let the music never be *the* reason why the pretended worshippers assemble themselves together. Let it never be the reason why they remain at home. Let it never grate on the sensibilities. Let it never stir up the soul like the drum and the clarion. Let it never remind the hearer of a circus or a dance. It should be expressive, and also impressive. It should harmonize with the spirit of the Sabbath. It should be an echo of the word that is preached. It should give emphasis to the voice of prayer. It should be performed by men "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

But among all the outward attractions of divine worship, there is none like that of the preacher's natural eloquence. No instrument of music is so sweet as the

human voice, when attuned as it may be by care. The most exhilarating band of performers on the dulcimer and the cymbal will be heard with less pleasure, than he who has learned to play well on that instrument which is as far superior to all others, as a work of God is superior to the works of man. Let it then no longer be said, that while an organist will spend years in learning to manage a collection of leaden pipes, the preacher is unwilling to exert himself for acquiring a control over the stops and keys of what is far more religious in its tones than the organ. So likewise the human eye can be made eloquent, when the tongue can say no more; the palm of the hand, too, has an eye which is full of meaning. But the philosophy of these organs is neither understood, nor applied to practice by our preachers. We have inherited from our Catholic ancestors a most irrational disregard to the expressiveness of the orator's movements. We barricade the preacher in a pulpit, which often cuts him off from the sympathies of the people, and renders it impossible to illustrate the meaning of "the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees;" impossible to express vividly the idea of "*standing fast* in the faith." Doctor Payson once came down from the pulpit, and stood face to face before his audience, that he might address them with the more effect. Doctor Nettleton insisted often on delivering his discourses from a platform, which gave him a greater proximity to his people and more of an appearance of sympathizing with them, than he could have from the "preacher's throne." I would make no strenuous objection to the simple gown which is sometimes worn in the pulpit, but still it must be regarded as in some respects an unphilosophical contrivance for a sacred orator. It was not originally designed as an aid to eloquence, but as a scholastic attire. The objection to it is, it keeps out of view the natural expressiveness of the human form;

and nature, even if it be a little ungainly, still if it be unfettered nature, is more eloquent than any artifice. When the old masters have painted or sculptured a Demosthenes, a Pericles, a Cicero or a Paul addressing an assembly, they have given to the orator a free arm, so that what has been called a "stiff elbow" may be a symbol of one well known emotion; so that what is proverbially called a "cold shoulder" may express the idea that belongs to it. But the prescriptive influence of our Catholic and semi-Catholic predecessors, who little understood the nature of oratory, has wrapped the reader of a sermon in a garb that conceals the meaning of the gesture, and in the folds of which the eloquence of a man's right arm is, as it were, "*a talent hidden in a napkin.*"

The genius of a Protestant ministry is that of a rational eloquence. It calls for no performers of a mass, but for intelligible speakers, who shall let nature utter her voice through all the organs which God has made for the purpose of expression. Instead of a marble Peter, frowning from the wall, and holding the two keys in his hand, it requires that there stand forth a *living* Apostle whose countenance shall beam with a moral sentiment, far more attractive than that which sleeps in the marble. Instead of an image of St. Sebastian, bound to a tree, and pierced with arrows, let there be a self-sacrificing preacher, whose voice shall represent a love stronger than the martyr's, and whose whole mien shall excite more appropriate feelings, than can be even aimed at by the chiselings of man. This is the fitting attractiveness of Protestant worship. It is the attractiveness of truth expressed. It changes as the phases of the truth change. It never thrusts itself into the place of the gospel. The proper eloquence of the pulpit can never be thought of and spoken of, while the theme of that eloquence is forgotten. That were a solecism in language. Real elo-

quence is not a distinct substance. It is the truth rightly communicated. It is the truth, not intercepted by a dead intonation, by a forced gesture, by an awkward attitude, by affectation of grace and politeness. A poor delivery is that which comes between the sermon and the audience, and obtrudes its own stiffness, its own tameness and lifelessness, its own mannerisms upon the notice of the hearer. If we were Romanists we might neglect the gift of speech, and hope to allure men into the sanctuary by the gorgeousness of our ceremonial. But we have no pompous ceremonial on which to rely, and therefore must resort to an appropriate elocution, as the highest outward grace of a Protestant service. If we dwelt in a land where the preacher is the only man who ventures to address an assembly, then we might lean on this privilege, and rest assured that a faulty eloquence in the pulpit is better than none at all among the people. But we dwell in a land where the laymen are popular orators; where the mechanic is master of a racy, vigorous diction; where the reformed inebriate can electrify an audience, who will sleep under a lifeless sermon; where the enemies of religion and social order have caught the spirit and the fire which the ministry have lost. Other men can speak without reading; and unless we can use in a good cause, the weapons which Infidels use in a bad one, we shall surrender the truth to dangers which can arise nowhere but in a republic. Nowhere but in *this* republic is the force of popular eloquence felt universally; and the church will be overborne, if this force be not controlled with unwonted skill.

If eloquence be the virtue of Protestantism, so is it with emphasis the virtue of American Protestantism; so is it with double emphasis the virtue of that form of Protestantism which prevails in New England. We, my brethren, are well nigh *shut up to the faith* fitly presented. We



have little else to depend on ; and for this very reason, may our services be made more attractive than if we relied on artificial forms. Notwithstanding all that is said of the baldness and frigidness of our sabbath services, it is still a fact that *they can be made more permanently pleasing* than the services of any church that boasts of its rubric and its liturgy. The freedom which we enjoy is favorable to the cultivation of eloquence. Our forms of worship are elastic and pliable, and will accommodate themselves to the exigencies of the day. An unbending ritual is the product of "dark ages." When we offer prayer, we are not required to hold a volume in our hands, and open our eyes upon the words of other men ; but, like Solomon in the temple, may lift our hands to heaven and shut our eyes from the world, and may speak as the Spirit giveth us utterance. We give to the preaching of the gospel a degree of moment, which is taken away by the unskilful repetitions of the Common Prayer Book, and which claims to be represented by an earnest and impressive utterance. I admit that we have lived too unconscious of the capabilities of our system. We have neglected the gift that is in us, and have deserved too many of the criticisms we have received. We have allowed too great a monotony in the structure of our prayers, and have sometimes used an unwritten liturgy. We have not sought to recover the naturalness of manner which an artificial education has perverted. We still allow our theological seminaries to remain destitute of all adequate instruction on this theme.\* We have also un-

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\* It is confidently believed, that if professorships of elocution were properly endowed and supplied in our theological seminaries, a more *immediate* and a more *manifest* service would be rendered to the pulpit, than can be performed by almost any other charity ; for the department of elocution is now more neglected than any other, and if nature were allowed to resume the place, from which the worst spe-

dervalued the sanctity of our houses of worship, and seemed to look upon them as dedicated to the service of God, and to meetings of the town; to scientific lectures, and to lyceum-debates; to drunkards not yet half reformed, and to demagogues who have sullied the holy associations of our pulpits. We have kept our communion tables as depositories of books and pamphlets and newspapers. We have allowed our people to sleep through the sermon, and then to leave the sanctuary as if they were hastening away from the benediction. But we must resist these and kindred evils. They are needless. We should preserve our tabernacles amiable, so that every one may be glad, when they say unto him: "Let us go unto the house of the Lord." Above all we should remember, that the glory of the outward house is as nothing compared with the attractive power of the word of God, which maketh even the human body a temple of the Holy Spirit. While then a preacher may not disregard the comeliness of the sanctuary, still he should say, and say it with the faith of an apostle, "Raise me but a barn, in the very shadow of St. Paul's cathedral, and with the conscience-searching powers of a Whitefield, I will throng that barn with a multitude of eager listeners, while the matins and the vespers of the cathedral shall be chaunted to the statues of the mighty dead."

In the last place, it is especially incumbent on the New England ministry to defend and perpetuate, so far as a sound judgment may approve, the principles of our Puritan fathers. We do not imagine that our ancestors were perfect men, nor that they are worthy of so much reverence as we should pay to the truth itself. Still they were well-read and far-sighted men, and had a peculiar

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cies of art has expelled it, the improvement in our speech would be seen and felt more *easily, quickly, and generally* than almost any other kind of improvement.

sagacity in discerning spiritual relations. They were qualified to perceive, that the great conflict among nominal Christians would be, at last, a conflict between spirituality and formalism in worship; between simplicity and parade in ecclesiastical discipline. They saw, almost by intuition, that the very structure of the church of England was in favor of too much form, and too little substance; that some of its inherent tendencies were adverse to the rights and the cultivation of the individual conscience.\* Therefore they forsook that church, and sought a home for the true principles of Protestantism on the soil which we inherit. The world have a right to expect, that a ceremonious religion, though patronized by foreign courts, shall not become dominant in the land of the Pilgrims. *It is expected of us*, that we shall preserve our churches as an asylum for the principles of the Reformation, that we shall resist the very beginnings of a superficial formalism, and the very first attempts to impose upon us the yoke which our fathers were not able to bear. *It is expected of us by our brethren in Europe*, that we shall not sleep as do others, but shall watch the signs of the times. We must not regard certain prelatical assumptions in New England, as *insulated* facts, but as parts of an extended system, which is coming into vogue the world over. The leading idea of this system is, to place the church first and Christianity second; to satisfy men with a ritual, and let the conscience sleep; to organize men into a compact denomination, rather than make each man feel his individual responsibility to "walk with God." It is a singular fact, that within the last fifteen years there has been a waking up of the spirit of high-churchism among all the hierarchies of the world. There has been a sympathetic movement throughout christendom; and what was once

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\* See Appendix, Note A.

low in the prelacy, is now not so low ; and what is high at present, bids fair to rise higher and higher. No one can read the journals of the Catholic church without feeling that the Papacy was never more aggressive, more successful, more confident of ultimate success, than at this very time. An influential school of English divines are bold in maintaining, that their national church is not, and never has been, and never ought to be, truly Protestant ; that her liturgy\* and her homilies are, and should be, adverse to the genius of the Reformation ; and that the spirit of such men as John Newton and Thomas Scott, is at variance with the very constitution of their church. The successor of St. Peter has lately declared in the Vatican, that a large party of the church of England have everything essential to popery, with the single exception of the pope himself. This party is daily increasing. It is becoming more and more formidable to its adversaries. It is favored by much of the talent, and piety, and self-consistency of the church. It has excited a sympathy for itself in our own land. It forms the van of a long procession that is wending its way toward Rome ; multitudes are pressing into its train, and too often, when they have once begun their march, they are escorted onward from one degree of church-glory to another, until sooner or later they plant their feet at Oxford, which lieth hard by the " eternal city." Strange to tell, some of our own Puritan brethren have set their faces thitherward ! The voice of our fathers' blood cries to us from the ground, and urges us to oppose this singular tendency in their sons. It is not merely the *result* but also the *approach* to it ; not merely *Romanism* but also the *incipient inclination* to it, which we must withstand. We have no moral right to remain pusillanimous, and allow the dialect of New England to become like that of Britain ;

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\* See Appendix, B.

our churches to be called no churches but mere sects ; our brethren to be called no church members but mere schismatics ; our clergymen to be called no clergymen, but mere lay-preachers.

We believe that our principles are those of fraternal communion with all who are fellow laborers with Christ Jesus ; therefore are we bound to struggle for these principles, against any attempt to introduce a sectarian exclusiveness into the place of a charity which recognizes the claims of all good men. We believe that our principles are those of fraternal coöperation with all sects who love the spirit of the gospel ; therefore are we bound to sustain these principles, against any attempt to prove that our baptism is uncanonical, and our communion at the Supper an unwarranted observance. We do not aim to build up our own denomination at the expense of another equally evangelical ; but we do wish to discourage that assuming spirit, which excludes the great majority of pious men in New England from the pale of a true church. We are not pleading the cause of our own sect against the welfare of others ; but we are pleading the cause of many sects against the exclusive claims of a hierarchy. We appeal to the Searcher of hearts when we say, that we have striven and are yet striving for a catholic union of all evangelical men in efforts to promote the common welfare. We differ from the advocates of a prelacy in some important particulars ; still, those divines who preach the simple gospel may be admitted to our pulpits although we be excluded from theirs ; and some of us are willing to partake of their sacramental bread, even while they would deem it almost a sacrilege to partake of ours. In defending the practice of catholic communion and a generous fellowship of ministers we are not sectarian, but are opposing a contracted policy which involves the essence of Romanism. We do not often



preach on the "excellence" of our mode of prayer, on the "apostolicalness" of our government, or on any of those minor peculiarities which distinguish us from our brethren. But we cannot allow, it is not just, it is not honorable, that others should endeavor to fill our land with sectarians rather than with simple-hearted Christians. There is a spirit of intolerance and formalism which is insinuating itself from our mother-country into our own, and which must be stifled in its earliest progress, or it will soon prevail beyond our hope of resistance. It has been recently said by some English divines, "The light that is in a merely *conscientious* dissenter is (what Christ has called) darkness."\* And they have set forth "a sort of graduated scale," on which we see that Judaism is higher than Mahometanism, Mahometanism is above Hindooism, the faith of the North American Indians is more elevated than Polytheism, and that, "so far from its being a strange thing that Protestant sects are not 'in Christ' in the same fulness that we (the Episcopalians) are, it is more accordant to the scheme of the world that they should lie between us and heathenism."† It is painful

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\* Tracts for the Times, No. 51. p. 5.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 47. p. 3. In "A Doctrinal Catechism of the Church of England," published in London, are the following questions and answers :

Q. Are not dissenting teachers ministers of the gospel ?

Ans. No—they have never been called after the manner of Aaron.

Q. Is it not very wicked to assume the sacred office ?

Ans. It is ; as is evident from the case of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, mentioned in the 16th chapter of Numbers.

Q. Who appointed dissenting teachers ?

Ans. They either wickedly appointed each other, or are not appointed at all,—and so in either case their assuming the office is very wicked.

Q. But are not dissenting teachers thought to be good men ?

Ans. They are often thought to be such, and so were Korah, Dathan and Abiram, till God showed them to be very wicked.



to say that language of similar import has been sometimes heard within our own borders, and that a spirit is rising among us, which, if not resisted speedily, will make such language familiar to our children. It is the spirit which transforms the motto "Christ and the church," into the motto "the church and Christ." Already have some of our laymen been told that their pastor was never really ordained; and they have therefore walked no more with us. Our candidates for the ministry have been pointed to the bishops' robes, that float before the fancy of young men; and some of them have gone where, it may be, they will realize the tempting vision. Our ordained clergymen have been approached with assurances that rich preferments awaited them, if they would cast contempt on their ordination, and kneel down in worship. "Come unto us," has been the language addressed to one; "for we have peace within the church but all is division out of it." "Come unto us," has been the language addressed to a second; "for we need your aid in quieting our dissensions." "Come unto us," has been the language to a third; "for the church has a beautiful unity." "Come unto us," has been the language to a fourth; "for the church is made the more interesting by the varieties which are embraced in it." "Come unto us," has been said here; "for we have a creed which prevents all such discussions, as will always prevail among dissenters." "Come unto us," has been said there: "for we

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*Q.* But may we not hear them preach?

*Ans.* No; for God says, "Depart from the tents of these wicked men."—It ought to be added, that the Oxford divines often admit that dissenters may be truly pious; and say, "that long established dissent affords to such as are born and bred in it a sort of pretext, and is attended with a portion of blessing, (where there is no means of knowing better,) which does not attach to those who *cause* divisions, found sects, or wantonly wander from the church to the meeting-house."—*Tract, No. 47. pp. 3, 4.*

always ensure the greatest freedom of thought and debate." "Come unto us," has been whispered in this place; "for the church is truly and securely evangelical." "Come unto us," has been intimated in that place; "for we stand in perishing need of evangelical men, who may save us from the reign of fashion and vanity." "Come unto us," has been the invitation to a pastor, who had been ordained without a display of apostolical succession; "for although you have been often ejected from your pulpits heretofore, we will give you a staff of office which no popular majority shall take away; we will save you from exhausting labors; we will furnish you with prayers already made, and will allow your sermons to be few, and short, and inoffensive." "Come unto us," has been the inviting offer to a missionary; "for we need your services in awakening among our clergy the spirit of missions, and we can write your name and give you a title among the patriarchs of the East."\*

Thus have we heard the voice of invitation, and afterward our ears have been saluted with the note of triumph. Proclamation has been made in high places, that within the last thirty years, "about three hundred clergymen and licentiates of other denominations have sought the ministerial commission from the hands of" bishops; that two-thirds of all "the present clergy of the church," "have come from other folds," and that of two hundred

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\* In regard to the measures which have been adopted with the design of persuading Congregational and Presbyterian candidates for the ministry to "take holy orders," much remains to be said. The preceding description has been given by way of preface; and it were painful in the extreme, to be compelled to write the whole chapter. There need not be a doubt, however, that many of those ministerial candidates who have left us, were conscientious in changing their relations; and that many warm friends of a prelatical church are guiltless of all attempts to urge its claims beyond the limit of fair and honorable discussion.

and eighty-five persons ordained by a single bishop in New England, two hundred and seven were converts from other denominations. If the triumph were, that these hundreds of clergymen and thousands of laymen had been transformed from sin to holiness, we would exult in the glad news. We call heaven and earth to witness, that we rejoice in the advance of any sect whose pure aim is to gather the wanderers from virtue into the congregation of the saints. But no; the boast is, that converts have been made, not from iniquity to godliness, but from sects and denominations to what is called, in a peculiar style of catholicism, *the church*.

All this activity of sectarian zeal we have witnessed and have not remonstrated. We have seen that some of our brethren, who left us from mere preferences of taste, have at length been aided by the convictions of their understanding, and have gone higher and higher upward, until they look down upon us as things of nought; still, we have borne it all with meekness and long-suffering. We have seen the aggressions multiply and become bolder and bolder, more and more successful; still, we have chosen to return no injury for injury, no proselytism for proselytism. We have been silent until we have almost given to those, who deny the validity of our ordinances, a prescriptive right to labor for the aggrandizement of their own sect, at the expense of ours. We have well-nigh abandoned all claim to our own possessions, and it appears *singular* for us to withstand an encroachment. But our forbearance has been interpreted into a sign of conscious weakness, and want of self-respect. It has been said by an eminent civilian, that we are ourselves grown tired and sick of our Congregational platform, and are willing to see it crumble down piece by piece. It has been confidently said to our young men, that some of their fathers in the ministry are gratified, when they see "the church"

extending itself upon the ruins of what was once called "the standing order," and that they even advise the candidates for our ministry to secure a more elegant ordination than we can give them. It has been proclaimed in triumph, that it is impossible to enlist the feelings of any people in a church which has no gorgeous ceremonial to charm the eye, and but little of outward circumstance to impose on the fancy; and that we therefore have but a weak hold upon our lay population. But we cannot accede to such a statement. We believe, that if the fancy be not often titillated by our observances, the reason and the conscience are impressed by them. We are confident, that if the truth on this subject be disseminated, the strong sense, and the moral feeling of our people will come out, and stay out, in the defence of Puritan institutions. It is our profound conviction, that they who abandon these institutions are lending their influence to a system, which will hereafter be far more hostile to a spiritual religion than it is now, and which must become more modest in its pretensions, or it will soon wear out the patience of meek men. It is in the nature of a religious commonwealth like ours, that the free Christians who compose it will not so easily unite in a sectarian contest, as if they were marshalled by a few diocesans. We are glad that it is so; but when our brethren once perceive that their principles are attacked, that their young men are carried captive, that some of their schools of the prophets have been injured by the assaults of a proselyting spirit, they will rise of themselves with a strength and an impetus that can never be equalled under a prelatical discipline. It is true, and we rejoice in it, that the genius of a popular organization like ours, predisposes its friends to live in peace with other sects; but when they are assailed too freely, when they cannot possess their own without being molested, when their goods

are taken away even from their strong holds, then they feel driven to self-defence, and one urges another onward until they move, strong and pressing, like the waves of the sea. We do believe, that the ecclesiastical system, which our fathers have left us, imparts an activity, and an energy, and a perseverance, and a deep-seated love of truth, which prove the system to be "Apostolical," and yet we hear it often said, that the system is worn out; that it worked well enough in the rude times of the Pilgrims, but is too unwieldy for a densely peopled State, too clumsy for the refinements of modern days; that it has been abandoned already by all young men of taste, and is acknowledged by our older men to be inefficient and ill-fitted for this polite generation. I know that we have by our past indifference given some reason for this charge, and have allowed the fascinations of ceremony to steal in upon the plainness of truth; but if we will only wake up from our lethargy, I can have no fear that the well-balanced mind of New England will prefer a showy worship to a thoughtful one, an outward beauty to inward strength. I know too well the hidden power of a Puritan faith. By night have I dreamed of an old ship of war returning from an important cruise, and lying becalmed near the main land, her sails flapping lazily against her shrouds, her sailor-boys playing at the mast-head, and her mates sleeping quietly in their berths; and the painted canoes of her enemy came around her, and flourished their gilded oars, and robbed her of her treasures one after another; but when she had parted with more than she could afford to lose, and spared her good things to her own hurt,—and when the breeze came, and the winds blew,—then she remembered her name and her destiny, she spread out her canvass to the gales, and her pennon streamed in the air, and her young men hastened to their posts, and her old men lifted up their voices



louder than the sound of the waves, and the cannon *spake* from her sides, and she moved onward, clearing her way through the small craft that had come out against her, and riding forward conquering and to conquer. I know it has been said of us, that we must be feeble so long as we have no titled dignitaries for our defence; that we are rude and unlearned, having no taste, and being over-run with fanaticism;\* that we are unordained, unconfirmed, unbaptized; able to exhibit no claim to a succession from the apostles, and destined soon to sink back into the nothingness from which we so recently emerged, as the creatures of a day. But do not let us feel ashamed of our Puritan discipline. Do not let us aspire to become more respectable and manly by hiding under the shadow of a bishop's lawn. Do not let us fear, that, if we be faithful, the prelacy will trample us into the dust, opposed as we think it is to the spirit of the New Testament, and to the earliest history of the church, and resisted as it has been by such men as John Owen and John Howe and John Milton; by Mosheim, Neander, and the great majority of learned Protestants in Europe; by our own Millers and Masons and Stronges and Springs and Dwights; by the schools of Chauncey and Hopkins and Bellamy and our two Edwardses,—“*geminos, duo fulmina belli.*” Our duty, brethren, is plain. It is to rise up and work; to make the truth known, and to hold it fast; not to think too much of the minor evils that attend our church-polity, nor to little of the preponderating good which comes from it. While we choose to unite with all men who love

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\* “Where little is given,” says an Oxford divine, speaking particularly of the Presbyterians, “little will be required.” Tract No. 47. The celebrated Dr. Hook of Leeds, speaking of the American Episcopal Church says, (we quote from memory,) “It constitutes the body who stand between infidelity on the one side, and fanaticism on the other.” Similar language has been heard, not unfrequently, in our own land.



union in a god cause, we must disdain to purchase the favor of secarians at the sacrifice of those principles with which "came the germ of our republic," and on which the prevalence of a spiritual Christianity will ever greatly rely. We are bound to make our spiritual heritage an ornament to our beloved land, and we have no license to leave it as a common waste ground, for the depredations of any who may have more zeal for forms than for equal rights. Let us remember, brethren, that a Puritan minister is required, in a preëminent degree, to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. On few other men is aid so constant and heavy a demand for mental improvement.\* Let us therefore raise the standard of Puritan education. Let us exhort our ministerial brethren to more diligence in study; to acquire more freedom in extemporaneous speech; to write *fewer* sermons and make those *fewer better*. Let us impress upon our churches their duty to collect large libraries, containing standard theological works, for their own use, but more especially for the use of their pastors. Let valuable collections of clerical books be deposited in every county-town, and made accessible to all the devotees of truth in that county.† Let us establish in this city of the Pilgrims, a Pilgrim Hall, that shall contain the writings of our fathers, and of our brethren, and of our successors; and let its walls preserve the portraits of our Cottons, and our Mathers, and our Hookers, and our Emmonses, and our Paysons, and our Hallocks, and our Beechers. Let us have mercy upon our colleges, and no longer allow them to hang their heads and pine away, as if they were forgotten of the mother that bore them. Let us give an adequate and a generous patronage to some one religious journal, that shall commend itself to all parties and schools

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\* See Appendix, Note C.

† See Appendix, Note D.

of the Puritans, and shall command the attention of every hamlet in New England. Let not a single parish be unvisited by our Quarterly Periodical which comes forth from New Haven, and which, from its published list of contributors, seems destined to be "the chariot and the horseman of our Israel." Let us abandon all doubtful charities; and let us concentrate more of our energies upon the salvation of our Western States. In those States are the future interests of our churches garnered up. Let us send our treasures like rivers, and our men like armies to the great valley, where the pope will reign unless Puritanism be triumphant, and that right early. Let us not strive to establish our peculiar church discipline there in opposition to our Presbyterian friends, but to plant the essential gospel; not to make our Western brethren *partisans with us in a sect*, but fellow-laborers in the promulgation of a simple faith. Let us wrap ourselves round about with truth as with a garment, and let our faces shine with the light thereof. Let us emulate the piety of our ancestors, and be men mighty with God and prevailing at the throne of his grace. Remembering the fires of Smithfield, and the ashes of our fathers and our mothers who sleep in Bunhill Fields, let us draw near to the footstool of mercy, and offer the prayer which was so often repeated by our Puritan ancestors:

*Give ear, Oh Shepherd of Israel! thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.—Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Let not, then, her hedges be broken down; so that all they*

*which pass by the way shall pluck her. Let not the boar out of the wood waste it, nor the wild beast of the field devour it. Return, we beseech thee, Oh God of hosts, look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madest strong for thyself.—So will not we go back from thee; quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. Amen and Amen.*



## A P P E N D I X .

### NOTE A.

Substantially the same objections which were made by our fathers to the established church of England, are made by English dissenters at the present day. Speaking of a persecuting sectarianism, an eminent writer says, “It makes the institutions of a particular church, of greater importance than the Christianity common to all churches. Zeal is always of this spurious character, when its aim is not so much to make men religious who were not so, as to cause parties to leave one place of christian worship for another; and when, in respect to education, the solicitude felt is not so much to abate the ignorance and vice of society, as to break down every apparatus of instruction which has not exclusive connexion with our own religious communion. From what we know concerning the proceedings of a very large portion of zealous Episcopalians, we cannot entertain a doubt that their ardor is very much of this faulty complexion. They have zeal, but it is not so much a zeal for Christianity, as a zeal against sects. They engage in education also, but it is not so much the ignorance of the lower classes that they fear, as the bias of the knowledge that may be imparted to them. That the poor should not be educated at all, would be deemed a less—a greatly less evil, than that they should be educated in a manner which may lead them into the ways of dissent. This kind of zeal, accordingly, has increased only as the zeal of dissent has increased; and its aim has been to counteract dissent, rather than to work side by side with it, or to employ itself upon the ground left in the greatest degree at its dis-

posal. It would sink into listlessness to-morrow, were it only that the religious zeal, or political disaffection, which it is meant to counteract, would follow its example. The forms of a particular church are its one thing needful, rather than the substance of Christianity as it may be found in every church. It is more concerned to put down dissent, than to put down wickedness; and to preclude dissenting education, than to encourage education in any form. The plea is a plea of religion; the real object is to uphold a fashionable worldly institute, and to strengthen a great political party. That multitudes of educated men and women should allow themselves to be actuated by a zeal which clearly announces that such is its character, would be sufficiently humiliating, though they should confine themselves to fair and honorable means in the prosecution of their object; but that they should descend, with that view, to every sort of petty meddling and oppression, is an exhibition of human infirmity truly distressing.

"It may be said that this account can only apply to worldly churchmen — men who have no just idea of spiritual religion. But we regret to say, that the conduct just now described is as conspicuous among the evangelical professors in the church, as among the merely orthodox. It may be much more inconsistent in the former connexion than in the latter, but it is as manifest in the one quarter as in the other. No doubt there are evangelical churchmen, whose scriptural piety renders them happy and honorable exceptions in this respect. But, on the other hand, there is many an orthodox churchman, whose natural pride, taking the shape of gentlemanly feeling, would not allow of his descending, for a moment, to the paltry processes of persecution, which are familiar as the matters of a daily routine to not a few of his evangelical neighbors. Unhappily, it is no uncommon thing to find, that we are often safer in having to do with a sense of honor in the worldly, than with notions of religious duty in the case of persons making the largest pretensions to spirituality as professors of the gospel."—In a note the author adds the following instructive facts:

"The population of Westminster consists of about 56,000 souls. For not more than 5000 of this population is church-accommodation provided by the Establishment. In one district it has been ascertained, that of 1635 families, 1324 were living in the habitual neglect of public worship; of 302 shops in the same district, 235 are open for traffic on the Lord's day. Not a few of the habitations of Westminster are known haunts of the most vicious of both sexes. In the Almonry, directly under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, are about twenty-seven houses, nearly the whole of which are houses of ill fame of the most abominable character. These houses have been

so occupied during the memory of the oldest inhabitants of the parish, and they are all the property of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster !

“ But let it be marked, that in the leases granted by the said Dean and Chapter, is the following clause :— ‘ *Or shall build or erect, or suffer to be built or erected, any chapel or meeting-house, for any separate congregation of people dissenting from the church of England, as by law established, or the said messuage or tenement to be used for any such chapel or meeting-house.*’

“ Now, the first conclusion from these facts clearly is, in the esteem of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, the people of Westminster had better be without any Christianity at all than be Christianized by dissenters. The second conclusion, following as clearly as the first, is, that there is not so much to merit discountenance in houses of the lowest infamy, as in places of religious worship, whenever the worship in them is not that of the established church. If facts have any meaning, these facts have this meaning. If the Dean and Chapter of Westminster can descend to do this—to say, by their conduct, that to enrich themselves from the gains of such places is an act of less doubtful purity than to tolerate the religion of a Watts or a Doddridge, what may we not expect elsewhere ? Society should be made to perceive, more fully and widely than it has done, that among the vicious passions which have place in the human spirit, religious bigotry is one of the most irreligious, the most immoral, and the most dissocializing !” — See pp. 105—108, in the second edition of a work on *Congregationalism*, by Robert Vaughan, D. D., Author of the *Life and opinions of Wycliffe*, *The Causes of the Corruption of Christianity*, *The Age of Great Cities*, *The Modern Pulpit*, etc.

It were easy to fill a volume with facts and statements, illustrating the tendency of the English church, at the present day as well as in the days of our fathers, to exalt the externals of religion above the inward excellence of it. It is a tendency which is observed and lamented by the most learned Protestants on the continent of Europe, as well as by dissenters in Great Britain. From the increasing facilities of intercourse between England and the United States, and from the predominant inclination to preserve unity and avoid “schism” in the whole Episcopal church, there is renewed reason to fear, that the spirit of British Episcopacy will become more and more conspicuous among a people who, although independent in name, are yet said “to borrow all their theology from foreign nations.”



## NOTE B.

Lord Chatham denominated the Liturgy of the Church of England "Popish." From the spirit which it breathes in reference to the outward rites of religion, from the generalness of its phraseology, and its want of appropriateness to the diversified, and in some respects, peculiar wants of Christians at the present day, it must be considered as deficient in several important elements of a truly spiritual service. The commissioners who were appointed by the crown for the revising of the liturgy about a hundred and eighty years ago, thus express themselves: "We humbly desire that it may be considered, that as our first reformers, out of their great wisdom, did at that time compose the liturgy *so as to win upon the papists, and to draw them into their church communion by verging as little as they could from the Romish forms before in use,*" etc. How far the sublime Litany of the English Church differs from that of the Catholic, may be seen by the following juxtaposition of the two:

## CATHOLIC MISSAL.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, listen to us.

Father of heaven, God, have mercy upon us.

Oh God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us.

O God, the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon us.

Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy upon us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Holy mother of God, pray for us.

Saint Michael, pray for us, etc.

Be gracious to us, spare us, Lord.

Be gracious to us, hear us, God.

From all evil ;

*Deliver us, Lord.*

From all sin ;

*Deliver us.*

From thy wrath ;

*Deliver us.*

## EPISCOPAL PRAYER BOOK.

Oh God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

Oh God, the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers ; neither take thou vengeance of our sins.

Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us forever ;  
*Spare us, Good Lord.*



## CATHOLIC MISSAL.

From sudden and unprovided death ;

*Deliver us.*

From the snares of the devil ;

*Deliver us.*

From wrath, hatred, and all evil desires ;

*Deliver us.*

From the spirit of fornication ;

*Deliver us.*

From lightning and tempest ;

*Deliver us.*

From everlasting death ;

*Deliver us.*

By the mystery of thy holy incarnation ;

*Deliver us.*

By thine advent ;

*Deliver us.*

By thy nativity ;

*Deliver us.*

By thy baptism and holy fasting ;

*Deliver us.*

By thy cross and passion ;

*Deliver us, Lord.*

By thy death and burial ;

*Deliver us, Lord.*

By thine admirable resurrection ;

*Deliver us.*

By the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete ;

*Deliver us.*

In the day of judgment ;

*Deliver us.*

We sinners beseech thee to hear us.

That thou wouldst spare ;

*We beseech thee.*

That thou wouldst deign to lead us to true repentance ;

*We beseech thee.*

That thou wouldst deign to grant peace and true concord to christian kings and princes ;

*We beseech thee.*

## EPISCOPAL PRAYER BOOK.

From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

From all blindness of heart, from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

From all inordinate and sinful affections, from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

From lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence and famine, from battle and murder, and from sudden death ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity, and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting and temptation ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment ;

*Good Lord, deliver us.*

We sinners, do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God, and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy church universal, in the right way ;

*We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.*

That it would please thee to bless and preserve all Christian rulers and magistrates : giving them grace to execute justice and to maintain truth ;

## CATHOLIC MISSAL.

That thou wouldst deign to preserve the apostolical master, and all the ecclesiastical ranks in our sacred religion ;

*We beseech thee to hear us.*

That thou wouldst deign to humble all the enemies of the holy church ;

*We beseech thee to hear us.*

That thou wouldst deign to lavish on the whole christian people, peace and unity, we beseech thee.

Son of God, we beseech thee.

O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world ;

*Spare us, Lord.*

Oh Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, listen to us, Lord.

Oh Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Oh Christ, hear us.

Lord, have pity on us.

Christ, have pity on us.

Lord, have pity on us.

## EPISCOPAL PRAYER BOOK.

*We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.*

That it would please thee to illuminate all bishops, priests and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of thy word, that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth and show it accordingly ;

*We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.*

That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people ;

*We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.*

That it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace and concord ;

*We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.*

Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

Oh Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Oh Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Oh Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

## NOTE C.

We regard it as a great excellence of our ecclesiastical polity, that it obliges our ministers to be energetic and laborious. Indolent and feeble minded clergymen may be inclined to flee from the toils to which they are subjected in our denomination, and to seek the repose which is promised them in prelatical sects. But intelligent ministers who desire to promote their own intellectual and moral welfare, will choose to endure hardness as good soldiers, rather than enjoy the rest which they may obtain by escaping from the pressure of duty. They derive new vigor and fortitude from such arduous la-

bors as they perform for the people. It is a privilege rather than an affliction to them, that their success must depend upon their inward merits more than upon their external appearance; that they are required to breathe the spirit of prayer more than to cultivate their voices for liturgical readings, to preach the word with power rather than to make an imposing display in the church. It is accordingly well known, that when a clergyman has been disciplined in a non-Episcopal denomination, and at length goes from it into a prelatical sect, he often stands higher among his new associates than he stood among his old; but when an Episcopalian becomes a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist, he is frequently mortified by the loss of his relative position; he finds himself unused to the manly toils which are now demanded of him, and ill prepared to reach the high standard of professional effort which is attained by his newly adopted brethren. This fact has been frequently noticed in England as well as in our own country. Dr. Vaughan, speaking of an Episcopal minister who abandons the Establishment, says, "He leaves a body of functionaries, who are accustomed to regard themselves as an order greatly superior to the ministry among dissenters; and at the same time, the probabilities are as a hundred to one, that he will have to take his place in this humbler class, not as a leader, nor as a person conspicuous in regard to position or efficiency of any kind, but as a comparatively obscure subordinate. How does this happen? Such a person has left a church, in which all the offices of religion to be performed have been provided to the letter by the care and authority of others; and he has now entered upon a connexion, in which the discharge of all such duties is made to depend on his own powers of invention and utterance. In conducting the public worship, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick, burying the dead, and even in the office of preaching, no demand has necessarily been made upon him beyond the power of reading his mother tongue. But in his new sphere he is required to conduct all these services from his own resources, and by means, for the most part, of his own command of ready and extemporaneous expression. It has been truly painful to witness the feeling of incompetency, which has sometimes accompanied this marked change of circumstances in the case of conscientious and even well-educated men. They have left a church in which, in this view, the apostolic qualification—'aptness to teach,' had no place among the necessary requisites to the office of a teacher; and they now have their place in a connexion in which that qualification is made to be indispensable to success.

"Now the temptation in this case has always been to look to the novel and eccentric, rather than to an established course of things, in which there was so little chance of realizing power or prominence of any kind. Into this snare the whole band of clergymen fell, who left the church of England about five and twenty years since with Mr. Baring : and the result was such as every man of sense must have foreseen. These persons set up a nondescript sect. But the talent which was not sufficient to give them that sort of place in the pulpit of dissenters, to which they deemed themselves entitled, was not sufficient to give them permanent efficiency of any kind. In their time, they were a sort of Plymouth brotherhood. They railed at the dissenting pulpit because they knew they could not rival it, and they found a sphere better adapted to their mediocrity in those obscure conferences and debates among themselves, which attracted attention so long as they were a novelty, but died away so soon as it became necessary that they should prove themselves reasonable and useful.

"If the correctness of the above representation be admitted, it will be obvious that the irregularities of the course often pursued by seceding clergymen, are not to be ascribed to the faults of dissent, so much as to those of the system in which such persons have been trained. Were our own system less rigid in restricting its places of honor and emolument to men of eminent capacity, our ranks might often partake of accessions from among the Episcopalian clergy. But while we have some offices for men of learning, and many a sphere of usefulness always open to the man of popular talent ; to persons not possessing the one or the other of these, dissent can never hold out any such prospect of success as would be attractive to the man who is already a minister of the church of England. It is not too much to say, that the ability which would be necessary to secure only a moderate degree of success as a dissenting minister, would suffice to render a man eminently successful in almost any connexion as a clergyman. Now we do not count it as to the discredit of our ministry that it is impossible, from this cause, that it should ever become a sort of refuge for the destitute. In general, the men who succeed in it must bring to it the talent, which would enable them to succeed so as to reach at least the same level of worldly respectability in secular pursuits."

## NOTE D.

It was intimated in the preceding note, that the often acknowledged superiority of apostolical over episcopal ministers is derived, in part, from the high demands which are made upon the former for intellectual exertion. It must be conceded, however, that these demands are sometimes disproportionate to the resources of him who is called to meet them. When this is the fact, he becomes either prematurely disabled in his physical system, or else unhappily negligent of some portions of duty. It is an axiom, that where too much is required too little is often effected; and that while a strong pressure is healthful to the spirit, an ill proportioned demand often depresses the resolution and deters from enterprise. Various plans have been proposed, beside those alluded to in the text, for increasing the facilities of clerical study, and the disposition to make use of them. The aim of all these plans is, to give a paramount importance to the duties of the pulpit, and to the preparatory discipline which they require. In order to save the ministers of our larger congregations from such a multitude of parochial services as disqualify them for the worthy preaching of the gospel, it has been proposed to revive the ancient system of associate pastorships. "Every one knows," says a judicious writer, "that the prejudice against this expedient is very strong amongst Congregationalists. Sometimes this repugnance rests mainly with the people, sometimes with the minister. In the case of ministers and people, the apprehension seems to be that favoritism and discord would probably result from such an arrangement. But if we do not possess sufficient wisdom and self-government to provide against such evils, it is indeed time we should beseech the Head of the Church to bestow upon us the improvement necessary to that end. Instances may no doubt be adduced, in which such conjoint authority or labor has not been found to work harmoniously; but in other instances the result has been in every way pleasing; and my deep conviction is, that in order to its being generally successful, nothing more is needed than that some of our leading churches should resolve to adopt it, and to make it succeed. To speak of one man as being the pastor of a church including four, six, or eight hundred members, and of a congregation making much more than double that number of persons, is assuredly preposterous. The pastoral duty of such a minister must necessarily be left in much, very much the greater part, undone; and be devolved, if performed in any shape, on a number of deacons, who thus become co-pastors in every re-



spect, except that they may not be preachers. In such a case, how much more effectually might a popular preacher be aided by an assistant minister of judicious pastoral habits. Surely there are many good men who might be highly useful in this latter form, who are not competent to sustain an interest as preachers, if left to rest wholly upon their ability in that capacity. In many cases, how much of advantage might result to the students in our colleges (Theological Seminaries), if they were encouraged to pass the first year or two after leaving their studies, in the discharge of the limited duties of assistant minister with some experienced pastor, and in connexion with some well ordered church. Many of our young ministers feel greatly the want of some transition connexion of this kind; and we may be sure that those among them who feel their need of it the least, need it the most. It is not necessary that such arrangements should be made otherwise than from year to year, and they might surely be so made in other respects, as to prove highly advantageous both to the youth and age of our ministry, as well as to our churches."

"We see, at this moment, some of our best men, not only drooping, but coming prematurely to the end of their course, from the manifest want of such lightening of the burden which has pressed upon them, as might have been realized by some arrangement of the nature which I now take upon me to press on the attention of my brethren, and on the attention of the churches. Nor is this all: the system which compels even our best men to be so constantly engaged in public services, and to so great an extent in the discharge of comparatively petty duties, dooms even *their* mind to a much lower state of culture than is expedient, and causes them to leave the world without bequeathing to the literature of our churches and of our common country those works of erudition, genius, and piety, which might serve to give to the eminent spirits of our own time no unhonored place with the great fathers of nonconformity. My fear is, that the chief impediments in the way of improvement in this respect are jealousy and selfishness:—jealousy, on the part of ministers, who allow themselves to be disturbed with the idea of possible ministerial rivalry; and selfishness on the part of our churches, who are bent on securing as much personal benefit as possible from a favorite minister. Bear with me in this plain speaking—it is the language of an earnest affection, and not of unkindness. My mind cannot escape from the conviction that we greatly need reform in this respect; and I am constrained, accordingly, to urge it, and pray for it."—*Vaughan's Congregationalism*, pp. 210—214.



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**REV. DR. HITCHCOCK'S DISCOURSE**

**BEFORE THE**

**PASTORAL ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS,**

**MAY 27, 1845.**

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13438  
HISTORICAL NOTICES OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

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A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATION

OF

7441-11

MASSACHUSETTS,

IN

PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON,

May 27, 1845.

~~~~~  
BY CALVIN HITCHCOCK, D. D.,

Pastor of the First Church, Randolph.

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BOSTON :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1845.

At a meeting of the Pastoral Association, May 27, 1845,

*Voted*, That the thanks of this Association be presented to the Rev. Dr. HITCHCOCK for his Sermon, this day delivered.

*Voted*, That a copy be requested for publication.

A true copy,

E. BEECHER, *Secretary*.

## DISCOURSE.

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MARK iv. 28.

FIRST THE BLADE, THEN THE EAR, THEN THE FULL CORN IN THE EAR.

THIS text is descriptive of the kingdom of God, or the Christian Church on earth. There is no "blade, then the ear," in the kingdom of God above. There all is "the full corn in the ear."

Called to address an association of Pastors, who, with the churches to whom they minister the word, claim to be a branch of the true kingdom of God on earth, it may be useful and interesting for me to dwell for a few moments on some historical notices, of the gradual growth of the order to which we belong. It is not my expectation to afford any instruction to my Fathers and Brethren on this subject, but only "to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

Our Puritan Forefathers, who first settled in this commonwealth, were distinguished, among other most excellent virtues, for their firm and conscientious loyalty. They had imbibed, and seem to have nourished with much care, a sincere regard for the form of civil government which prevailed in their mother country. This was a mixed government, consisting of a Monarch, a House of Lords, and a House of Commons. The House of Lords had a constitutional veto upon the action of the House of Commons, and the King had the constitutional right to a veto upon the action of both Houses, the Lords and the Commons. This was the mixed Government of England. And were any proof needed to show the loyalty of our Forefathers, in their sincere attachment to it, it could be found in

the fact, that they constituted the first churches of Massachusetts almost exactly upon this model. The Brethren who were communicants at the Lord's table, answered to the House of Commons in England; then was instituted a board of Ruling Elders corresponding to the House of Lords; and the Pastor was a very humble representative of the Monarchy. And what is worthy of peculiar notice is, that the Ruling Elders held the right of a veto upon the Brethren, and the Pastor had the right of a veto, in some cases, upon both Ruling Elders and Brethren.

That this was "the blade," the original constitution of the churches of Massachusetts, is rendered sufficiently obvious by an appeal to the earliest writer upon ecclesiastical polity in New England. "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power thereof, according to the word of God, by that learned and judicious divine, Mr. John Cotton, teacher of the Church at Boston, New England," was first published in the year 1644, twenty-four years after the landing on the Plymouth rock. This was the first book of the kind written in this country. Mr. Cotton says expressly, "No act of the people's power or liberty," that is the power or liberty of the brethren, "doth properly bind unless the authority of the presbytery concur with it." By presbytery in this place, he evidently means the bench of ruling elders. He tells us, "It is an usual tenet of many of our best divines, that the government of the Church is mixed of a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy." This shows that the acts of the brethren of the church could not be valid until they had been revised and sanctioned by the board of ruling elders, because the government is *mixed*, which it would not be, if the vote of the brethren were alone final and binding. The ruling elders had, therefore, the right to confirm or not, according to their judgment, the acts and votes of the brethren—that is, they had the right of a veto upon the action of the brethren, or the right to give a negative to their action, and put a stop to it; just as in England the house of lords can put a stop to the action of the house of commons, by giving a negative vote upon any bill which has passed the lower house.

That according to the original constitution of our churches,



the pastor had the right to negative the acts of both the brethren and the ruling elders, seems clearly implied in the following declarations, taken from the same book. "In the handling of an offence before the Church, the Elders have authority, *sententiam ferre*," "to give sentence," against the offender. By the elders in this place the author evidently means pastors, for immediately after he calls them "Ministers of the Gospel."\* The same point is more fully illustrated in another place where he says, "Though the jury have given up their judgement and verdict, yet the malefactor is not thereupon legally condemned, much less executed, but upon sentence of the judge. In like-sort here, though the brethren of the church, do, with one accord, give up their vote and judgement for the censure of an offender, yet he is not thereby censured, till upon the *sentence* of the presbytery." The writer evidently had his eye upon one man who was to pronounce the sentence, that is, upon the pastor. This shows that he could give a negative to the action of the whole church by refusing to pronounce sentence.

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\* Mr. Cotton says, "Both these *acts of power in ministers of the gospel*, (*viz. Jus dicere, and sententiam ferre*,") are foretold by Ezekiel, chapter 44: 23, 24, "They shall *teach* my people the difference between holy and profane, and *cause them to discern between* the unclean and the clean. And in controversie *they shall stand in judgement* and they shall *judge* it according to my judgement," &c. According to this, ministers of the gospel were to expound the law, and their exposition was final, "*an act of power*." And how could their right to "give sentence," be called an "*an act of power*," if no discretion were left with them whether to "give sentence" or not? Does the *usus loquendi* of the sixteenth century justify us in understanding that as "*an act of power*" which one had no right to refuse to do? The right of a slave to obey his master is a singular "act of power." The author is not unaware of the fact that the "monarchy" to which our Fathers held in the church, was originally the head of the church, Jesus Christ. Mr. Cotton's language is, "In regard of Christ the head, the government of the Church is sovereign and monarchicall." But the question returns, what "acts of power" has he bestowed, 1, on the ministers of the gospel, 2, on the ruling elders, and 3, on the brethren? These were the questions, substantially, discussed by Mr. Cotton. The right of a veto, in certain cases, on the action of the whole church, in the hands of the minister, seems to be implied in the language of this writer; and affords the best if not the only account of the existence of a foolish notion, often met with, that when any one is excommunicated from the church, the pastor is responsible. "Acts of power," in the primitive clergy of New England, vanished rather gradually among their successors. Some twenty-five years ago the author was struck with the ability of a very aged female to recall the scenes of childhood. Her little brother had played truant, and fallen into a pond, and was carried to his father's house almost dead from drowning. The minister came in and gave directions that the child must be "*whipped*," which was accordingly done. Verily we *have declined* from some of the ways of our Fathers.

They could not compel him. Those churches had no mesmeric process by which they could make an old veteran Puritan, in the dignity of a clergyman, speak according to the will of another. They held to no such "bondage of the will" as that. It must be admitted that this venerable Father is rather cautious in expressing the royal prerogative of a pastor. He gives us the thing signified, rather than the word. Still his views are not undiscoverable.

This conformity of the early churches of Massachusetts to the model of the civil government of England, is *the fact* which enables us to understand the first writer upon the subject in our country. It may be called *the key* to "the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

We should not think it strange that our Forefathers adopted an ecclesiastical polity resembling the civil institutions of their mother country, because they were right in the belief that those institutions were the best known to them. The same general reasons which led to the early constitution of the Congregational churches, led to the adoption of the Presbyterian form. This form had its prototype in the four syndics, the minor council, the major council, and the general assembly of the ancient republic of Geneva. And when Protestant churches arose there, they adopted forms with which they were familiar, and from which they hoped for good. These forms, however, produced a stormy condition of the republic, leading to vast stratagem and strife. And they have not proved much less unfortunate in their ecclesiastical application, in Scotland and America. They are forms which arose in the midst of terrible struggles for supremacy between Counts and Bishops, and the people were happy to escape from both under almost any forms of popular freedom. It is quite obvious that both these forms of ecclesiastical polity must have arisen after the principles of popular rights and liberty had found a lodgement in the convictions of good men; and yet, while much remained to be achieved on so interesting a subject. This cannot be true of the Episcopal form of ecclesiastical polity. From its constitution, it is manifest that its birth was antecedent to any well defined principles of popular freedom. This alone is enough to lead all men who are not bewildered in fog,

or dazzled with the love of power and splendor, to avoid her grasp or flee from her embrace.

Considering the intensity and fondness with which the eyes of our early Forefathers were turned to the forms of civil government in their mother country, it should not seem wonderful that they adopted and loved *the union of Church and State*. The earliest records and acts of the churches in this State show clearly what was the fact on this subject. All the synods held among our Fathers were, I believe, called by an act of the Legislature, at the request, no doubt, of the leading ministers and members of the churches. Such was Congregationalism in "the blade."

This original state of our churches seems to have continued without essential alteration till the rise of Oliver Cromwell in England. As this remarkable man was a zealous Puritan, it should not excite our surprise that our Fathers felt strong sympathy with him, and the new order of things in the State, introduced in his day. He dispensed with the king, and the house of lords. It was entirely accordant with his notions of right, that a *man* who had taken up arms against the constitution and liberties of England, should be held responsible, though his name was Charles Stuart, and he had gone through the ceremony of being crowned. In his treatment of Charles I., and in dispensing with the house of lords, the aristocracy, he seems to have acted on the principle of common sense, that a man is a man, and but a man. He taught all the Anglo-Saxon race that a man's excellence consists not so much in what is *on* his head as *in* it. In this respect, future generations will look back to his day as one of the most important eras in the history of the world. Poor Cromwell! his bones were burned, after having been long buried, because his mind was too deep to be fathomed by the pampered intellect of any cavalier in England. The only reason that he was not a greater man than Buonaparte, was that he was a better one.

The churches of this commonwealth were new modelled by our Fathers in accordance with the new order of things in the civil government of England. They either dismissed the board of ruling elders in the churches, or when they departed this life neglected to appoint new ones. Being firmly attached

to the plan of a commonwealth, as modelled by Cromwell, they dispensed, among themselves with this house of lords spiritual. In humble imitation of putting a crown upon the head of the king, the Fathers of New England had placed a wig on the head of a minister, and decorated him with bands. But since the time of Cromwell, there has been a tremendous falling off of these venerable appendages, these ensigns of royalty, because they signified something in which our Fathers had ceased to believe. The constitution of our churches became a simple house of commons, consisting of the brethren who sit together at the communion table, and a protector, in the person of their pastor, whose office, in regard to the action of the church, is that of a simple moderator, and whose source of influence over their action is confined wholly to his intelligence and piety. And abundant experience has shown that if we can secure an Oliver for the pulpit, instead of a Richard, the Republic is safe, united, energetic, triumphant. We profess not, with our Episcopalian brethren, that we have invented an engine that will work safely without a conductor or engineer ; or nearly as well with one, whether he be wise or foolish, faithful or unfaithful, skilful or unskilful, drunk or sober. When they plead against us that our churches cannot live without an able and godly ministry, we plead guilty to the charge, and lift up our prayer for the day to come when the same thing shall be true of every church. It is clear to us that a flock which can live without food from its shepherd, is not the best flock in Christ's fold. Give us a starving, agonizing, bleating flock, rather than one plump and quiet while fed with chaff.

Our Fathers were firmly attached to the English commonwealth. Upon the restoration of Charles II. they proclaimed him in this province more from necessity than choice. Though they acknowledged him as their lawful sovereign, the people protected some of the exiled judges who voted to condemn the first Charles, against the search made for them by the officers of his son. And in this they were sustained both by civil rulers and ministers. Should any one doubt this, I would refer him to the dullest book ever written in America,—the book of "The Judges," by the venerable Dr. Styles. The Resto-



ration, as it was called, seems to have produced no change in the constitution of the churches in this State. Our Fathers believed conscientiously, as we do, after mature investigation, that the churches in this State, in their present organization, correspond most exactly to the model given in the New Testament, and sustained by all that is truly primitive in Christian antiquity. And they stood fast. When the house of lords was restored in England, they did not follow the example, by restoring the bench of ruling elders in the church. We do not pretend that the change from the first form to the second was instantaneous, or simultaneous in all the churches; a change effected by any one act. It was not so. But a general principle obtained, that the best way for the churches was to dispense with ruling elders. And that principle has never been reversed. We have heard of one church in modern times, formed on the principle of having ruling elders to give a veto, when they judge best, on the action of the brethren. But the example has not been followed. She stands "alone in her glory," with her house of commons and her house of lords.\*

Cromwell and his times awakened more thinking in England than was ever in the nation before or since. During this period of awakened thought, several very important principles were matured and settled among Congregationalists, respecting the church. One, which has exerted an important influence upon her history, is, that no man, nor any number of men, can lawfully *legislate* for the church of God. We act in this respect on the declarations of the New Testament, "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy"—"One is your Master, even Christ." Neither the individual church, nor any

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\* It requires neither documents nor arguments to show that, for a long time past, the Congregational churches, generally, have been without ruling elders; and that, in this respect, a change took place among them. That change had an adequate cause. But, as it was gradual and silent, no account of the cause can be expected in any ancient document. The earliest objection the author ever heard against the form of a Congregational church was, that it too exactly resembled that of the English commonwealth. The oldest men with whom he conversed in his youth ascribed the change in the form of our churches to the influence of Cromwell; and as no other adequate cause for the change can be assigned, which seems so natural or reasonable, the author supposes there is no temerity in ascribing it to this. If he is in error in this particular, he will cheerfully stand corrected.

body of churches associated together, nor any body of representatives or delegates of churches, can constitute a legislative assembly. Our laws are all made, all finished and completed, by the great Head of the church. No new law can be made ; no one can be repealed ; no one diminished or enlarged. Our whole business, as churches and ministers, is to execute the laws of Christ. We are mere *executives*. This principle, when fully matured and established, put a period to synods in the Congregational churches ; because, as a synod is not, and, from its nature, cannot be an executive body, and as legislation is out of the question, there is nothing in the world which a synod may lawfully do. We are not more entirely free from state legislation for the church of God, since the separation was established between church and state, than we are from ecclesiastical. In this one respect, Congregationalism may well consider herself very highly, and, I may add, singularly, favored. On this point she stands alone. Let her take warning from a memorable example in our own day. What has been called "the New School," in the Presbyterian church of America, consisting of many thousands of professed Christians, and hundreds of ministers, were, a few years since, cut off from the said Presbyterian church by an act of the General Assembly. When these professed Christians complained that they had not been fairly treated, according to the rules of discipline in the standards of said church, this was readily conceded ; and they were calmly told that they were cut off, not by an act of discipline, but by an act of legislation ! The excinded brethren, being conscientious Presbyterians, could only complain that the legislation was unjust, harsh and cruel. Had they been Congregationalists, they might have stood up, and cried, Legislation ! human legislation for the church of God ! Legislation is by itself an unlawful thing, and of course every act pretending to it is null and void. We have always treated that act as null and void so far as we are able ; having sent delegates to both parties, with the wisdom which is without partiality. We, brethren, could not conscientiously admit the right of any body of men, good or bad, to legislate for the church of God. It is as dangerous to peace and love as it is unlawful and unscriptural. With us, the Bible, the Bible only,



is our law-book and our rule-book. We have no dispute among us respecting the sense of the rubric, whether it ordains this or that complexion for a minister's hose, this or that fabric to protect his poor weak head from the chills and damps of night, or whether he shall preach in black or white, blue, green or red. We admit no human legislation for the church of God. And the providence of God seems to indicate that there shall be "no peace" to any branch of the church where this principle is not adopted; a principle, before which all canons, bulls and decretals,—all rubrics and rules of man's injunction,—all human forms and ordinances, and orders of office, shall be blown away like chaff. When the Bible, and the Bible only, becomes the sole bond of union, then will begin that lovely and longed for day, when Christ's disciples shall be one, even as he and the Father are one. Then will be heard no more such phrases as "the Bible *and*"—or "the Bible *as*"—

Let our churches beware. However desirable we may esteem it to send from the communion-table a professed Christian, who is for any reason obnoxious to his brethren, we cannot do it by legislation. We must adopt a process of discipline by which to execute the laws of Christ. We must show forth the law in an indubitable light, either in a plain declaration that those who do the thing complained of cannot inherit the kingdom of God, or by an example showing that the apostles refused to admit such a man to the church, or that they ejected him for this very offence; and then apply the law to the case in hand, with all meekness and faithfulness and love. A mere legislative vote is not a Congregational enactment. We are nothing but executives. Every new term of communion set up in this world, since the time of the apostles, is an act of legislation; and, on Congregational principles, a nullity.

Let us beware. Some ministers, especially of the younger class, have expressed a *want* of some authorized, constitutional manual for their guide; either the Cambridge Platform, in its original state, or as revised, or some other treatise on the same subject; some definite, authoritative laws, made such by an act of legislation, put forth by some authorized body. But, is not this wanting something which no sound Congregationalist

has a right to want? Who among us dares to legislate for the church of God? Have we in our wisdom discovered that the laws of Christ are insufficient? Can we look abroad on any other denomination of Christians, at this day, without seeing much to warn us off? Is not some attempt at human legislation for the church of God the true source of all the distraction by which the Christian world is now rent and disgraced? Why should we fall after the same example of unwarrantable meddling with the ark?

Were human legislation for the church warrantable, a doubt might arise whether a form of organization, so exactly resembling that of the English commonwealth as ours does, were the most perfect. Our own republic is constructed on the plan of two houses, having a mutual veto upon each other; and this is thought an important check upon unjust or injurious legislation. And the inquiry might arise, why should there not be such an arrangement in the church? The reply is, that the church is an executive and not a legislative body. As such, our present organization seems admirably adapted. Here, every man charged with a moral delinquency is tried by his peers, his brethren of the same body with himself. Every one acts under the conviction that the same rules of evidence and of proceeding which he adopts and applies to an accused brother, may soon be brought to bear upon himself. "With whatsoever measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again," is the strongest safeguard against injustice and oppression known to man. The only further security needful, seems to be, that as every man and every body of men are liable to act from mistake, or in the heat and haste of passion, there should be some provision, made by general agreement, for an appeal from the executive action of one body to the judgment of another. With Congregationalists of Massachusetts, this tribunal of appeal is constituted on the principle of the *arbitration*. This is an important tribunal; by many esteemed more lovely and valuable than any other. The laws of our country are as often executed righteously by the arbitration as by the court. In every arbitration, civil or ecclesiastical, each of the parties concerned is allowed to have an equal voice in electing the individuals who are to compose the tribunal. With the familiar acquaintance

enjoyed by this community with the principle of the arbitration, it seems strange to us that any man should think it absurd and monstrous for an accused man to be allowed to choose any part of the tribunal which is to sit in judgment upon him. The only difference between a Massachusetts ecclesiastical council and an ordinary arbitration, is, that, in regard to the former, there is a general understanding that one half of the tribunal shall consist of clergymen and the other half of laymen, members of a church.

There are three obvious advantages in this Massachusetts form of council. The first is, that, like the ordinary arbitration, it is adapted, as no other can be, to secure the most thorough investigation. Men never investigate so deeply as when they are deeply interested. The second is, that not being a standing body, known for weeks and months before being called into action, there is the least opportunity possible for moral bribery, by exciting prejudice and awakening jealousy and spite. In this respect, our form of council, and ours only, has the same shield which is thrown around the impartiality of a jury. And the last is the moral weight of the decision of such a council. The party which fails must fail by the decision of some of its own friends—of men chosen by itself. There is no chance to hurl back the cry of persecution, oppression, or unfairness. Who does not feel more confidence in the decision of an able and upright arbitration, considering its constitution, than in that of the court where righteousness, if it arise at all, must arise amid “the glorious uncertainties of the law”? And when it is considered that the only bill of pains and penalties allowed by the gospel, is an unfavorable public opinion, expressed in that phrase, “Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican,” it is obvious that no tribunal can be as efficient for that end as a Massachusetts ecclesiastical council.

One strong objection against what is called the plan of consociation, by which a standing body of appeal is constituted, is, that it sacrifices the advantages of the arbitration. Is it time for the churches of Massachusetts to cast a shade over the principle of arbitration? Shall we begin to say to our people, when difficulties arise, do not think of settling with your neighbor by arbitration? It is absurd for an accused man to choose

any of those who are to try him. Take the man into court, a standing court. We are just looking to see all the nations of the earth come bowing down to Massachusetts Congregationalism, to learn how to settle their disputes without the aid of Captain Stockton's Peacemaker. And shall we now tell the world that we have lost our confidence in the principle of arbitration? Rather let it be known the world over—let it be published in all languages—in Russian and Turkish, in Italian and German, in French, Spanish, and Portuguese—that a very numerous section of the Christian church—enlightened, learned, orderly, peaceable, quiet, benevolent, energetic, and spiritual—have for centuries settled all their difficulties, and avoided strife and division, by the aid of the simple principle of arbitration.

We are sometimes addressed by our brethren of other denominations, in language like this :—"It seems to us that your mode of church government must be utterly *inefficient*, because among you a decision of council is only *advisory*. Whatever it may be, however righteous, wise, or benevolent, the parties are not bound to abide by it." It is even so. And the reason is, that our Fathers had a profound regard for the right of private opinion; the very essence of Protestantism. Their desire was to stand off, as far as possible from the Pope; and to infuse principles into the community which should keep their posterity as far off from him as possible. Our ecclesiastical decisions are not *of course* binding on the conscience. They only bind by their truth, and righteousness, and evidence. In this respect we differ from what we hold to be *right* in the civil government; and this difference seems to us enjoined in the gospel. We understand our Saviour as speaking approvingly when he said, of the civil government, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them." By this, we understand that the acts of civil rulers do bind us *of course*, except when they require us to do what God forbids, and then we are bound to suffer penalties with patience, and are not to rebel against civil government; our only liberty with respect to it being the liberty to *improve* it when we can without introducing anarchy or despotism. But though civil rulers may exercise



lordship over us, our Lord expressly declares, "*So shall it not be among you.*" The reason for this difference seems to be this: civil rulers are to secure righteousness among men, a multitude of whom profess not to have any scruples of conscience, and manifest by their deeds that their profession is sincere. A lordship, therefore, is indispensable. We are among them, and must bow to the same authority which is needful for them. But in the Christian church it is not so. Here men profess to have conscience; and to cultivate it, without which neither holiness nor morals is possible, it is necessary to respect it. We do respect it, and leave the right of private judgment unimpaired, even with respect to a result of council. When a Christian man, trained among us, wanders beyond the area in which ecclesiastical decisions are held simply as advisory, nothing strikes him more forcibly than the unscrupulous character of good men. The power to *admit* members is conceded to the church exclusively, though by mistake she may admit one who will prove a heresiarch, or a troubler to Israel. On the same ground, the power to *exclude* lies ultimately in the same body, notwithstanding any result of council, though in his exclusion the church may err.\* In such a case another church can receive him, upon the recommendation of a council; for no one church can control the action of several churches.

It is not true that we *sustain* any party, *of course*, in rejecting a result of council. The right to judge belongs to others as well as the parties concerned in the conflict. And any party rejecting a decision of council which is obviously just and right, does in fact *promote* the execution of that decision, in substance if not in form. Public opinion frowns upon that

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\* In like manner, it is conceded, that a church, *when settling a minister*, is to be the judge of his fitness for the pastoral office, as it respects his moral and religious character, and his abilities and acceptableness. The author has heard but one dissenting voice on this point, and that was from a preacher who had tried long and in vain to obtain a permanent settlement. He thought there should be a power which could compel some church to *take him*. Why should the same church that judges respecting the character of a minister *to be settled*, be denied the right of trying him afterwards? it being understood that their act may be referred to the tribunal of appeal.

party—he just makes himself still more “a heathen man and a publican.”

Want of efficiency in the Congregational mode of church government! We look at the entire ecclesiastical separation between the Unitarians and the Orthodox, in this Commonwealth, and ask, where on earth was ecclesiastical proceeding ever more efficient, and at the same time so harmless, so noiseless, leaving behind it so little rancor? It is like the energy of spring, which, without noise or observation, throws up the blade and the bud, the cowslip and the daisy, with a majesty of strength which nothing short of Almighty power can control or hinder. Is it the time for us to weaken, at all, our testimony to the right of private judgment, when efforts are made, such as never were before, to crush that right throughout the world?

Intelligent men every where allow the just influence of the principle of common consent, or common agreement. By this any rule of Congress can be suspended, altered or repealed. This principle has an extensive operation in the Congregational churches. To this we are indebted for our creed and our covenant, for all our regulations in regard to the time, form and frequency of public worship, and all things convenient and proper, not expressly enjoined in the word of God. It is this principle of common agreement or consent which has introduced and sustained among us the occasional use of the *ex parte* council. By this common consent we are allowed to use this, *only* when a stronger party refuses to a weaker one the usual mutual tribunal of appeal; an indispensable safe-guard this against the oppression of the weak by the arm of the strong. We have known the mother connected with a church which became Unitarian, refused the privilege of placing herself and her children under the ministry of truth, and refused a mutual council. And who can but see that in such a case, and in others which may occur, the principle of *ex parte* council is vital to justice and to human rights. Let not this principle be evil spoken of by the sons of the Puritans. No marvel that common sense, common honesty, and common Christianity should produce common consent in favor of such a principle. It is not true that *ex parte* councils always decide in favor of



the party calling them. The facts are otherwise ; such is the regard to truth and righteousness among us. And when a stronger party has *for once* consented to constitute the mutual tribunal of appeal, the *ex parte* council can never after be allowed ; because common sense shows that a man can never have the right of appeal but once in the same case. He may petition for a new trial, and the petition may be reasonable, but if not granted, he can go no further.

This principle of common agreement is our safeguard, and it is the strongest possible, against *innovations*. Nothing of the kind, unless obviously conformed to truth, and promotive of peace and holiness, can ever prevail. We have some things new, as Bible societies, Missionary societies, and others, by common consent. But speculative minds have tried innovations in doctrine, and in practice, till it is seen that common consent to a change, at all visionary or doubtful in tendency, is not easily gained. Nothing can come in or go out but by common consent. This secures two important points. First, a door is left open for improvements, as it ever should be in an imperfect world ; secondly, improvements must be *improvements*, obviously so, or they cannot prevail.

This principle of common consent is nearly the same as that of common law, much used in our civil courts. When I first entered the ministry, thirty-one years ago, my youthful mind was filled with perplexity respecting our church politics. There seemed an indefiniteness in regard to principles and rules. In this state of mind I was called to open the federal court with prayer. I was invited by the judge, one of the brightest ornaments of the American bench, to sit by his side and witness the proceedings of the court. The first case tried, was a petition for a new trial on behalf of a United States soldier who had shot one of his comrades, and had been convicted of murder. The first reason urged for a new trial was, that one of the witnesses on the former trial had not been summoned by the proper officer." This was ruled out by the court on the principle of common sense, that a witness is not the less credible for being improperly summoned. The second reason urged was, that evidence could be produced to prove that the prisoner was drunk when he was alleged to have com-

mitted the crime. This was ruled out by the court, on the principle of common sense, that as drunkenness is a crime, it is absurd to allege one crime in excuse for another. Thus was point after point settled by common sense, in the highest court of the land, even where a man's life was at stake. Now it occurred to me that we have just as good a right to have common sense in our Congregationalism, and to use it, as the court had. I have neither been troubled nor baffled since, and have lost all my zeal for change.

It is impossible to run lines of separation, in our order, either between east and west or north and south, because, by common consent, our churches, like those in the apostolic days, have no federal relations; a noble illustration of the principle, that whatever is scriptural is found, upon trial, to be in the highest degree reasonable, useful and safe.

I only add, on this part of the subject, that the principle of religious toleration first became matured and settled in our order, in the time of Cromwell. Hume with all his prejudices makes this grand concession, "*The Independents, from extremity of zeal were led into the milder principles of toleration. Of all Christian sects this was the first which, during its prosperity as well as adversity, always adopted the principle of toleration.*" He thinks it passing strange that so reasonable a principle should not have been discovered before, and by better and wiser men. And we cannot but regret that this principle had not been matured and settled before our Forefathers left England. Then should we have escaped the reproach cast upon us, for their undue severity towards Quakers and Anabaptists. Still we love to tell our children that *they* were the first to discover the golden principle of toleration. This principle, in which we are all steeped from our childhood, makes us charitable in regard to slight varieties in modes and forms, and ready to co-operate, heart and hand, with all of every name and form, who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in every work of faith and labor of love.

Such is Congregationalism in her more mature state, in "the ear." I am not able to throw my thoughts back so far into my childhood, as to recall the moment when I was not delighted with a blade; its shooting vigor, its symmetrical form, its sword-

like point to sunder the too heavy raindrop, its velvet softness, and its cheerful green. But the discretion of years has suggested that it is not often good policy to strike off "the ear" for the pleasure of always admiring "the blade."

Every one who has observed the process of nature knows that "the blade and then the ear," are but antecedents and preparatives for something of greater importance, and of higher value, even "the full corn in the ear." The sense of this, as understood by us and our Fathers, is well expressed by that old Puritan word *spirituality*. By this is meant the emotions of a human spirit, awakened by a view of God's truth, and in accordance with the kind of truth presented at the time to the spirit. The spiritual man is not indifferent when God utters the doctrine of entire depravity, nor does he smile or trifle. He mourns and is in bitterness. His humility is not only in word. It is the humility of the spirit. His confessions are the confessions of a spirit, in personal intercourse with God. When God speaks terror, the spiritual man is not unmoved, nor does he leap with joy. He trembles; his heart shakes like a leaf. He feels the terror of a spirit. When God speaks peace, and holds forth the cross, as the way in which he justifies the ungodly, the spiritual man is not regardless, nor does he feel like jesting or mocking, nor is he satisfied with the words of hope and thankfulness. In him is the faith and the gratitude of a spirit. When God speaks promise, and gives assurance to the believer by oath, the spiritual man is not lifeless or stupid, nor does he cling to the crackling transports of an earthly vanity. His joy and rejoicing are the joy and rejoicing of a spirit, filled with visions of eternal glory. When God speaks his character, his glory, the loveliness of his excellency, the spiritual man discerns the things that are spoken, and he feels what is far higher than submission; it is the spirit's admiration and delight which cause ascriptions of praise to burst from his lips. When the love of Christ for his enemies is disclosed, the spiritual man hides his head in shame, that his heart has been so ready to call down fire from heaven on those who have provoked him, and he melts into thankfulness and kindness. When he hears a *claim* from God, for any thing that he has, body, soul, child, or fortune, and the word of truth shows that the Lord hath

need of this, for his cause, his honor, the Saviour's conquest, he looks up to heaven and writes the word **THINE** on whatever is called for. He neither dares nor desires to withhold, to keep back a part. These spiritual emotions, awakened by truth and corresponding to the nature of the truth presented to view, give all that variety to Christian experience found in the best written religious biographies ; a variety which is the scorn of infidelity, and the mockery of profane literature. This is "the full corn in the ear."

This spirituality is distinguished from all that is outward, formal, ritual. It is not the service of the lips, or the tongue, or the knees ; not the observance of days, or times, or seasons, fasts or festivals. It is not the use of the eye, even in reading the words of eternal life ; or when upturned to heaven ; nor the use of the ear, though listening to the voice of the charmer, the thunder that shook the base of Sinai, or the anthem that celebrates the glory of Emmanuel, or the stability of the eternal throne. It is not the motion of the church-going foot, or the eloquent arm "that suits the action to the word." Spirituality is not the fruit of the lungs, whether employed in stentorian declamation, or breathing forth notes, soft and mellow and enchanting, as those of a harp ; nor is it contortions of body or disfigurings of countenance, by which some would appear unto men to fast, or to feel transports of extacy. There is nothing spiritual in the grim position of melancholic muscles, or the twang of an unearthly tone. Spirituality is distinguished even from all merely intellectual efforts, though directed to the most useful purpose—that of clearing from fog and mysticism the loftiest points of theological truth, or casting the illumination of vast learning upon the darker portions of Scripture. Woe to the mere builder, who is not a living stone in the spiritual house ! The wealth which he may consecrate to erect temples or cathedrals, and adorn them with carved images or the speaking touches of the pencil, or to found colleges, or religious houses, is no more acceptable to God than that which built and adorned the temple at Ephesus, dedicated to the worship of Diana.

To promote spirituality is the great end of all that pertains to us in "the blade, then the ear." Without this, all our princi-



ples and forms of organization are vain. Are not our forms adapted, "in reason's eye," for this end? The absence of all stateliness in our ecclesiastical tribunals, of all grades and distinctive emoluments in office, exciting to pride and ambition; the severe simplicity of our modes of worship, and of our ecclesiastical architecture, and the plainness of clerical manners and apparel, enable us to place every child under the hearing of *truth*, with the least possible influences to distract his attention. We carefully exclude from the eye and the ear every thing that can awaken the fervor of poetic ecstasy, too often mistaken for spirituality. We have a history, and a martyrology even, peculiarly adapted to awaken sympathy. But this is studiously kept in the back ground, because of the very great danger of mistaking mere human sympathy for spirituality. Our children are much more familiar with the life of Jonathan Edwards than with that of John Rogers. We cling with a firm grasp to Christian truth; because every true spiritual emotion must arise in view of truth, and is an attainment which no man can reach who rejects the truth; for it is by the truth that the Spirit of God sanctifies the people. Upon every trial, it is found that, where this inward spirituality is wanting, if the claims of God fall upon the man, they are not honored and answered; and when temptations strike him, they prove fatal. This spirituality, my fathers and brethren, in the hearts of our pastors and churches, is "the full corn in the ear."

The system, like every other, must be tried by its fruits. And what have they been? We should not be true to the lights of history, did we fail to say, that when we think of the fact that the Puritan Dr. Bound was the first man since the apostolic age, who discovered in the word of God, and propounded to the world, the true doctrine of the Christian Sabbath; and reflect on the extent to which that doctrine is now hushing the hum of this world on the first day of the week, and multiplying listeners, hanging with deep reflection on the lips of faithful men of God in the ministry; and when we think of the extent of surface over which Puritanism has thrown the doctrine of religious toleration, the fires it has extinguished, the freedom of soul it has insured, and the steady march of this light into realms of the deepest darkness; and when we reflect

on the fact that the writings of the Puritans are the storehouse from which a vast majority of the best religious books are selected for universal distribution, and that in writings, theological, metaphysical, philosophical, and recently philological, the Puritans are equally distinguished ; when we think of their pattern theological seminary, and the extended influence of its example ; and when we think of our education society and our temperance reformation, and our various and successful missions at home and abroad, and find that there is no mountain so rugged, no ravine so deep as to stop the foot of our sons, and of our daughters even, in their way to the heathen's heart, with the word of love and of life ; we cannot but thank God for the belief that there is, somewhere, a deep spirituality of soul from which springs a religious enterprise and energy and perseverance which should make PURITAN a world-honored name. And we cannot but feel, when we find a young man, trained among us, in the true mother church of New England, ashamed of such a mother, and turning his back upon her with scowling contempt, that he is a man much to be pitied, a moral ruin, a deep fanatic.

Would we prevent the recurrence among us of such a calamity, and answer the high ends designed by God in the existence of our order ? Let us cultivate among ourselves and our people a higher standard of spirituality. When we reflect on the present aspect of our churches, we feel that there is much cause for deep humiliation and self-abasement ; but none for despair or despondency. The infrequency with which special tokens of the love of God are manifested, should be deeply pondered by all on whom lies the responsibility of moulding and guiding the sacramental host of God's elect. Let us beware of delusion. There is no way in which any branch of the Christian church can so conscientiously commit suicide, as by earnest and feverish controversy respecting church politics. Instead of this, let us all feel the deepest solicitude to retreat, not to a cave or a cell, but to our closets and our conference-rooms, and the hearths of our people, filled with the spirit of humility, of wisdom, and of love, and uniting with the dear children of God, offer up our prayers and supplications to Him



who is able to help us, with an importunity which cannot be denied.

Let us remember, as pastors, with fear and trembling, that we of necessity stamp our own image, in a great degree, on our people. Are we proud? So are they. Are we gloomy? So are they. Are we light-minded? They will not be serious. Are we haughty and dictatorial? They will not be lowly. Are we covetous? Will they not love the world? Are we ambitious? Will they not be aspiring? Are we men of strife? Will they be sons of peace? Are we hasty in our spirit? Will they be slow to wrath? Do we appeal to the bad passions of our nature, and indulge in harsh and severe denunciation? The very children will catch our spirit. Are we crafty and subtle? When will our people be adorned with the robes of simplicity and godly sincerity? Are we resting in outward forms; satisfied if our performances are intellectual, deep, brilliant and polished? Will they feel the deep emotions of spirituality, in view of the truth of God, uttered from our cold lips? When our heads are laid in the cold valley of death, and a more godly ministry shall stand in our places, what will they judge of the various influences we shall have left behind us? What will God judge of those influences, when we stand before him, at the last day, with the three or four generations to whom we shall have spoken the word? May the God of all grace enable us to feel, for ourselves and our people, the crushing weight of the fact, that "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." AMEN.



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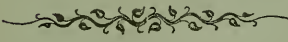


REV. MR. STEARNS'S SERMON

BEFORE THE

Pastoral Association of Massachusetts.

MAY 25, 1852.





*The Position and Mission of the Congregational Church.*

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A

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

7441-11  
Pastoral Association of Massachusetts,

IN

CENTRAL CHURCH, BOSTON,

MAY 25, 1852.

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BY WILLIAM A. STEARNS.

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B O S T O N :

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# SERMON.

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EXODUS xiv. 15.

AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME? SPEAK  
UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD.

IF ever a minister of the gospel may be over-awed by any mere human presence, it is when rising, as a public teacher, before the wise, the good and the venerable of his own profession. Not only must he exclaim with the Apostle, as he has often done in his ministrations to the less learned, Who is sufficient for these things? but with the trembling Prophet, Ah! Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child. May the Lord put forth his hand on this occasion, and, touching the lips of the speaker, say, as he did to Jeremiah, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

I will not waste your moments, my brethren, by professions of self-distrust; for if I have learned what modesty and dignity require, no man should suffer himself to be greatly abashed in attempting to perform an assigned duty, even before the most reverend of his fellow-men. Remembering this principle, I shall endeavor to discourse in the pres-

ence of the ministry of Massachusetts with the same freedom that I would address the most unlettered audience. In doing this, I am encouraged by the thought, that while our Sabbath congregations may naturally enough receive the teachings of their pastors somewhat on trust, able and well-trained scholarship will be likely to correct whatever is unwisely spoken, by its own better judgments.

When the Hebrew tribes fled from the oppressions of Pharaoh, pursued by the armies of Egypt, destruction behind them, the Red Sea before, the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. Our fathers, fleeing from the old world to the new, here attempting to establish institutions after the Mosaic pattern, took pleasure in contemplating themselves as the elect nation of modern times. They discovered many analogies between themselves and the old theocracy. They had come to possess another Canaan, and to found another kingdom of God. Like the Israelites, they rose often at the divine command and went forward. As the word *forward* inspired *them*, it also indicates a national characteristic, and should be a watchword with us.

In sympathy with this word, I propose, on the present occasion, to consider the POSITION AND MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH. I use the word Church, instead of Churches, for convenience, thinking it not unscriptural, and limit my remarks to a single department of the great Christian body, not in disparagement of those other denominations which sympathize with us in most of the principles and institutions which we value, but

because it is only the Orthodox Congregationalists, and indeed those of Massachusetts, that I am called on this occasion to address, and because, among all the prevailing forms of Christianity, we place our own, of course, at the head.

I. I proceed, then, without intending invidious remark, to speak first of the *position* of the Orthodox Congregational Church.

This may be done in reference to its history, its doctrines and its institutions.

1. The position of the Orthodox Congregational Church, considered in reference to its history. We are the legitimate descendants of the Puritans. Their blood flows in our veins. We inherit their principles of civil freedom, of ecclesiastical polity, of Christian doctrine. We stand on the Platforms of 1620 and 1630, more completely than any other Christian organization now inhabiting the new world. Of us it may be truly said, *whose* are the Fathers.

The Pilgrims were the founders of a new country. The principles of civil and religious liberty which they inculcated, have not only stood the test of more than two centuries, built up more than thirty magnificent commonwealths, but have shaken the old despotisms of Europe, and are destined, none of us doubt, to change, eventually, the civil as well as religious condition of man.

As to the character of the early settlers, I fear no contradiction from any thorough student in American history, when I assert that they were generally among the choice men of the age. The Massachu-

setts Colony was eminently a colony of ministers. It contained a remarkable number of publicly educated men ; and even the humbler classes were characterized by the three principal elements of greatness, wisdom, enterprise and faith.

Among the Plymouth settlers, Elder Brewster had been a man of property and distinction in Europe, had held important offices under Queen Elizabeth, and had received a gold chain from the States of Holland, for the faithful management of affairs among them. Governor Bradford was as familiar with the Dutch language as his own, spoke French, had mastered Latin and Greek, and had learned to see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God "in their native Hebrew beauty." Winslow, after years of service in America, was recalled to fill high stations in the new Puritan government of his native land. Standish, descended from the house of Standish, was heir apparent to a great estate of lands and livings, surreptitiously kept from him ; and that little world, which came across the Atlantic in the Mayflower, was a flock, generally speaking, worthy of such a shepherd as John Robinson.

Of the Massachusetts Colony, among the distinguished laymen who helped to found our churches, the magnanimity, wisdom, faith and statesmanship of Winthrop, will call forth the admiration of all coming time ; while that stern, but wise and good old Puritan, Thomas Dudley, must ever be held, where his character is fully understood, in honorable remembrance.

Among the clergymen, we have Wilson, a fellow of King's College, for three years a student of law

in London, afterwards chaplain in several honorable families. He was, says the New England Memorial, "orthodox in judgment and very holy in conversation, full of faith and prayer, eminent for humility and sincerity, and largeness of heart as the sea." John Cotton, also educated at Cambridge in England, could discourse in Hebrew. His writings show him to have been a master. Of him certain persecuted Germans, who had experienced his liberality, said, *Fautor doctissimus, fidelissimus, plurimumque honorandus*. His tombstone, without falsehood, declares him to have been "a living, breathing Bible, his head an index to the sacred volume, his very name a title-page, and next, his life a commentary on the text." Hooker was educated in the English universities, and was a preacher in London for a time. Neal describes him as a son of thunder in the pulpit, and John Cotton calls him

"A son of thunder and a shower of rain,  
A pourer forth of living oracles,  
In saving souls, the sum of miracles."

Shepherd, also, was liberally educated and distinguished in his own country. William Johnson speaks of him as a "gracious, sweet, heavenly-minded and soul-ravishing minister," for whom "thousands of souls have cause to bless God." He has left several valuable works, all of which smell fragrantly with the flowers of heaven. His Parable is hardly second to any treatise on Christian experience, Edwards on the Affections not excepted. John Eliot, one of the most remarkable of men, was also a graduate at Cambridge. Not only was



he singularly devoted to his Saviour, exposing himself to hardships for Christ's sake, such as nothing but an iron constitution and an iron faith could sustain, but he seems to have achieved an almost supernatural labor. A man who, from civilization, could plunge into a wilderness, master and reduce to writing the strangest of strange languages, construct a grammar for it, translate into it the whole Bible, Baxter's Call, and several of Shepherd's works, learn to preach the gospel fluently in that unmouthable Indian tongue, live to see three thousand hopeful Indian converts and twenty-four tolerably educated native Indian preachers, deserves to be reckoned among the chieftains of the church. Time would fail me to speak of Norton, so able in his public prayers that a godly man would travel on foot from Ipswich to Boston to be a partaker of one of them; of Mitchell, whom Neal calls "an incomparable preacher," and of whom Richard Baxter said, "If there was an œcumenical council, Mr. Mitchell were worthy to be the moderator of it;" of Richard Mather, and his illustrious sons and descendants; of Davenport, considered by some the greatest of New England's early great men, and his associate, Stone, called, in the quaint poetry of the times, "a stone that held light," "a stone splendid diamond." These, and a multitude of others, all stars, though of different magnitude, formed a galaxy in the firmament of New England, whose glory no constellation ever surpassed.

These are the men who founded our commonwealths, established our system of free schools, laid



the foundations of Harvard College, and organized our Congregational churches.

We pass down the track of history for a hundred years, omitting to notice the wise and good of the intervening period. About a century ago, there appeared on the banks of the Connecticut, as the pastor of a country church, a modest young minister, whose name was destined to illumine the whole western world, and be an ornament to his country in the theological circles of Europe. Jonathan Edwards, by his voluminous writings, especially by his immortal Treatise on the Will, has achieved a work in Christian metaphysics which ensures him a reputation, in that department, equal to the master minds of Germany, Great Britain and France. As eminent for devotion to the ministerial work, and for deep Christian experience, as for his wonderful powers, by universal consent, no brighter light has ever shone among the luminaries of the Christian church.

A splendid train of strong and highly sanctified intellects followed. Hopkins, the younger Edwards, Bellamy, Smalley, West, Emmons, Dwight, Appleton. We cannot mention their names without a glow of admiration, and, as Congregational ministers, an increase of self-respect. Hard and thorough students, independent thinkers, powerful preachers, eminently devoted to their Master's service, they consecrated their keen, strong minds, to the illustration of religious truth. And though some of them advanced views of doctrine not generally received among us, they have discovered new relations of truths, and new methods of expounding

and defending them, which have given New England divinity a name wherever the English language is spoken. In no part of the world, in no age of the church, has our Christianity furnished, within equal limits of time and space, a more brilliant collection of sainted theological scholars, than the enumeration now given presents.

I passed over Willard, who died at the commencement of the eighteenth century, leaving a work of systematic divinity which Prince and Sewall have commended as, in their opinion, "one of the noblest and choicest bodies of critical and practical divinity" ever composed. I must now pass over Samuel J. Mills, the first efficient mover in the greatest work which the Christian enterprise of our country has ever undertaken, and Spring, and Worcester, and Griffin, and Morse, and their associates, and such names as Phillips, and Evarts, and Samuel Hubbard, so closely connected with the rise of those benevolent movements which adorn the present century. I cannot even mention the names of a great company of more recent conquerors, who have gone to be crowned. "Expressive silence speaks their praise."

Tears force themselves to my eyes, as in parting with our illustrious dead, I am reminded of the pillars which have fallen in the oldest theological institution of New England, since we last met on this occasion. Who that has roved or meditated among the shades of Andover, will ever forget Moses Stuart? The tall, attenuated form, the earnest, restless eye, the flash of genius and humor, the passionate emotion, the childlike simplicity and sin-

cerity, and the solid instruction of that venerable stalwart scholar, will give a charm to his class-room no more. The spot where he taught, the nervous movement, the original manner, the reverential group which sat at his feet; how like a living picture they come before the mind! His voluminous writings, his fine analyses of biblical idiom, phrase, text and treatise, will live; but *Stuart* has gone! gone to converse with those grandold Prophets and with that noble company of Apostolic Seers, to whose breathing thoughts and burning words he had consecrated the energies of an entire life.

Insatiate Death! couldst thou not be satisfied with a single victim, when it was *such* a victim!

“I have marked it well—it must be true—  
 Death never takes one alone, but two!  
 Whenever he enters in at a door,  
 Under roof of gold or roof of thatch,  
 He always leaves it upon the latch,  
 And comes again ere the year is o’er.”

Edwards, too, is dead! He fell not like the veteran when his wars were ended, but like a soldier in the thick of battle with his armor all upon him. A man of strong native powers, of inflexible application, of great acquirements, of singular facility in the collection and generalization of facts, combining practical and executive ability with a talent for research, while his amiability made all men his friends, and his modest piety secured the confidence of the churches, his reputation as a scholar adorned the seminary where he taught, and his too early disease has thrown gloom over the whole republic of letters. One of the most remarkable men, con-

sidering his attainments and his promise, among us, with all his learning and goodness and weight of character, he should have stood before you in the speaker's place to-day. But alas, the impressiveness of his absence must now be received, instead of those eloquent lessons which his presence could not fail to have bestowed !

Nor can I forget where I stand. These walls, this desk, remind me that from the high noon of life and usefulness, a brilliant intellect, an eloquent preacher, a strong and magnanimous spirit, a devoted friend of Congregational principles, has passed away. Showers of tears dropped on that death-cold cheek, but could not quicken it into life. An honor to our connection, very pleasant has thou been to me, my brother. Rogers, Edwards, Stuart, are at rest !

Sed moestum illacrymat templis ebur, æraque sudant.

For two whole centuries, the Congregational church contained the almost entire theological literature of the country ; and even since the multiplication of sects, the ancient order holds, in this respect, no secondary position.

The history of our denomination shows its title to its old appellation, *the established order*. With changes around it, it has stood unchanged. It has had sectarian fires on one side, and Socinian frost benumbing its limbs on the other ; but the beatings of its heart were regular and strong through the whole. When subjected to amputation, though the knife approached its vitals, it soon repaired and put forth its energies with more power

than before. Nothing could kill it. Obstacle, dismemberment, did it good. It shines in the fire, and has always acquired purity, growth and moral power from its sufferings. At no time, unless at the beginning, has it stood forth with more beauty, dignity, thrift and strength, than that with which it comes to us.

2. The position of the Orthodox Congregational Church, considered in reference to doctrines. It is no part of my design to recite old creeds, though their sound should be as a choral anthem. The symbols of our faith are not strange to your ears. I wish only to remind you, that the doctrines which we receive and inculcate as the principles of revelation, are doctrines of *singular power*. As means of social influence, as motives to individual and public action, as the foundation of an eloquence which stirs the soul, they are the POWER of God unto salvation.

MAN, the offspring of the Creator,—as respects reason, accountability, immortality, the same in *kind* with his Almighty Father, great in his origin, great in the germs of his eternal being, capable of attainments which no finite imagination can yet conceive,—but fallen, “little less than archangel, ruined!” Redemption through the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God; omnipotence working through human agency in the renovation of the human race; sonship with God, heirship with Christ; heaven, hell,—what themes of contemplation,—truths to rouse the world, words to wake the dead. The world’s history tells their power; for they have transformed the world.



3. Our position in reference to institutions. By institutions, I mean both established forms of church polity and voluntary organizations designed to promote the advancement of religion. Congregationalism acknowledges no headship but Christ. It acts under written constitutions given by him. The power of government resides in the whole body of believers connected with each particular, local church, and is represented by the adult male members in full communion; so that, under Christ, a Congregational Church is a truly republican institution. As such, it accords in its principles of liberty with the fundamental principles of our civil governments, which were indeed derived from it. Without being connected with the state, it is in harmony with the state. While the churches, "distinct as the billows but one as the sea," maintain fellowship with each other, there is no such centralization of power as might hazard Christian liberty; so that Congregationalism, as a working institution, is perfectly adapted to the genius of the people and the civil institutions of the country.

By organizations of a more voluntary character, I have reference to educational, and to what are called, by way of eminence, benevolent institutions. Congregationalism has always been the patron of learning. Renouncing all authority but that of the Scriptures, insisting on the right of private judgment, it esteems knowledge as indispensable. It is a matter of congratulation, therefore, that Congregationalists have established colleges and theological seminaries all over New England. These institutions are great fountains of evangelical, Puritan



influence. But Congregationalism does not confine learning, like Romanism, to a favored class. It was the mother of common schools. It has ever considered education as the handmaid of devotion, and sees, in all the efforts to enlighten mankind, the carrying out of its principles and the prognostics of its success.

Our benevolent institutions need not be enumerated. They are chiefly the growth of the present century; and though still susceptible of improvement, furnish a powerful machinery for good. We look upon what they are, and what they are doing, with astonishment, and anticipate great results.

II. Having spoken of the *position* of the Orthodox Congregational Church, I now proceed to its *mission*.

Our mission is not reformatory, but progressive. It is not reformatory. Reformation is the great watchword of modern times. Protestantism was the offspring of reformation. It was nurtured in the schools of reformation. It has innate tendencies to reformation. It naturally connects the idea of the highest Christian greatness with the idea of reformation. Its model heroes are heroes of reformation. Its history is the history of a great reformation. Such is the impulse that we have received in a reformatory direction, that ill-balanced minds, not subject to those conservative influences which made Luther and Knox and Calvin judicious Christians as well as great reformers, are forever restless with desire of change. While proving all things, they do not hold fast that which is good. Always fixing,

they are never satisfied when a thing is well fixed. Existing institutions are never right with them. Like the simpleton's beans, plant them as you will, they come up the wrong way, and you must pull them up and plant them over again. This tendency to pull down and build over, is almost a *furor* with us. Even some of our women have caught the epidemic, and, not satisfied with the ordinances of God concerning them, are praying to be reformed into men. Not content with correcting evils, the fanaticism of reform often burns hottest against what is best. Nothing is too sacred for it—even Christianity itself must be reformed.

Now while we have room for improvement, our special mission is not like that of our Fathers. We have no new principles of liberty to assert. We have no ecclesiastical thrones of oppression to overturn; no papal domination or monstrous system of antiquated error to throw off; no star-chamber or court of high commission to put down. Prelacy, with broad phylacteries and enlarged borders of garments, backed by the civil sword, no longer terrifies us. Mind is here free to think and speak and write and worship, free as the winds which bore our fathers over the Atlantic, free as the mountains and forests and wild shores on which they first lifted up their psalms. Nor have we to contend much with fanaticism. We have orderly Sabbath congregations, solemn, earnest, but quiet worshipers. Every where the church-going bell seems, in its mingled sacredness and peace, to have borrowed chimes from heaven.

In doctrine, no mighty change is required or

anticipated. Our principles, coming down to us from Christ and his Apostles, have constituted the grand staple of belief through all the forms and phases of theology from the beginning. Expounded anew by the great Genevan, after ages of darkness and superstition, subjected to a fresh examination by some of the master-spirits of the old world in the free wilderness of the new, but modified in philosophical relations, and brought into more powerful working order by a mind which, for metaphysical acumen and comprehensiveness, Dugald Stewart has characterized as the compeer of the gigantic Leibnitz, still and ever subject to investigation, to the addition of beautiful shades and harmonies, and to the discovery of new modes of refuting errors, the old doctrines of the cross, as they have appeared substantially in the confessions of two thousand years, still stand forth among us as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. So brightly do they blaze from our family Bibles, so thoroughly have they been tested by the experience of centuries, so sacredly are they associated with names of which the world was not worthy, so deeply have they entered into, and so thoroughly are they inwrought with the whole religious life of our communion, that it is hardly in the power of reformation itself to make radical reforms in them.

Our mission, then, is PROGRESSIVE. We have not yet attained, nor are yet already perfect. The church calls for more strength of religious principle, for more intensity of religious feeling, for more simplicity of aim and entireness of devotion, and more faith in her ministers and members. There is yet

room for the more earnest and protracted labors of Christian scholarship; room for the higher cultivation of Christian virtues and graces; room for the setting forth of greater examples and self-denials; room to breathe out a more heavenly spirit on society, and make the spicery of the Lord's garden shed its perfumes more widely on the world; room for a more all-pervading influence of religious truth and feeling about and upon the children of the church; room for the more constant and more powerful presentation of those great principles which, through the Holy Spirit, are destined to renovate society and bring out of the chaotic present a new heaven and new earth. In one word, it is our special mission to stimulate, develop and direct existing energies.

In accomplishing this mission, there are some things which demand consideration and are important to success. I shall name a few of them.

1. Union among ourselves. We are in little danger of disunion from difference of opinion as to forms of church government, or the nature and effect of Christian ordinances, or from questions of national expediency and obligation. The storm of controversy, on such subjects, may sweep over us and toss the branches of our ecclesiastical tree; but no *such* storms will be likely to uproot or seriously injure it. Our greatest danger is on questions of dogmatic theology; especially on questions which connect themselves with that far-reaching and entangling and most terrible of problems, the nature and powers of the human will.

The ancient philosophers generally inculcated the doctrine of human liberty. So did the early fathers

of the church ; yet not always with clearness, or consistency. “ Although the Greeks, beyond all others,” says Calvin, “ and among them particularly Chrysostom, have exceeded all bounds in extolling the ability of the human will, yet such are the variations, fluctuations and obscurities of all the Fathers except Augustine, on this subject, that scarcely any thing certain can be concluded from their writings.” (Calv. Inst. B. II. chap. ii. sec. 4.) “ The Latins,” he adds, “ have always retained the term free-will, as though man still remained in his primitive integrity.” Among the schoolmen there was, of course, a variety of opinion. The greater proportion, perhaps, maintained in some form a doctrine of liberty ; but, for the most part, it was simply a liberty from constraint and coercion. Calvin, following Augustine, does not hesitate to call the will a slave. We are “ surrounded on every side,” he says, “ with the most miserable necessity.” (B. II. chap. ii. sec. 1.) And again, “ If the whole man be subject to the dominion of sin, the *will*, which is the principal seat of it, must necessarily be bound with the firmest bonds.” (Inst. B. II. ch. iii. sec. 27.) Calvin, however, does not intend, by his definition, to destroy the proper nature of will as an electing faculty, but maintains that while the will is a slave, it is a willing slave. Samuel Willard, who completed his Exposition of the Catechism in 1707, takes nearly the same, though somewhat softened view. Considering the will a captive, though a voluntary captive, he says, “ It sufficeth that the will is not forced while it retains its spontaneity, and acts willingly, and not contrary to its inclination ; which



spontaneity is consistent with an impotency to some actions and a necessity of others. There are some things which a man cannot but choose and pursue, and others which he cannot but refuse and avoid, and yet he doth it with a full freedom or spontaneous acting therein." (Ques. 31, fol. ed., p. 455.) I have now indicated, from Calvin and Willard, the line of opinion followed by the Calvinists of New England previous to the time of Edwards.

About the middle of the last century, President Edwards published his memorable work, in opposition to the Arminians, on the Freedom of the Will. He maintained "that men, in a proper sense, may be said to have power to abstain from sin and to repent, and to do good works and to live holily; BECAUSE IT DEPENDS ON THEIR WILL." (Life of Edwards. Works, vol. i. p. 507.) In this definition, he preserved the true nature of *will*, as being an ultimate principle, changed the metaphysical nomenclature which had hitherto prevailed on the subject, and overthrew the libertarian advocates of a self-determining power. Whether Edwards's free will, connected with his doctrine of motives and philosophical necessity, was essentially different from Calvin's enslaved will, I shall not here undertake to determine; especially as in his definition of the will, Edwards embraced the whole circle of desires, inclinations, affections and moral acts. Receiving his definition, and carrying out his views of human freedom, Edwards's disciples maintained that all sin consists in action, and that man has a perfect natural power to abstain from it and obey the whole



will of God,—a very considerable divergence, at least in terms, from the principles of Calvin.

Others, without rejecting the scripture doctrine of divine sovereignty and foreordination, hold to what they consider a more complete and decided liberty. Rejecting the notion of a self-determining power in the will, they believe in a moral spontaneity; in a will not necessitated in its action by “states of mind” or objective motives, but *truly* free; a liberty as complete as it may be possible for the Creator, in the nature of things, to bestow. This class includes not only the followers of Kant and Coleridge, but all those who believe, with Bishop Butler, that we exist, as moral beings, under a *plan* of moral government, which, though chosen from all eternity as the best possible plan, and prearranged of course in all its details, nevertheless includes, as a part of the plan, this most perfect free agency. In their opinion, in the words of Morell, (Hist. Phil. p. 300,) “that very attribute of Deity, which renders God himself a spontaneous source of action, was communicated by the Deity to man when he made him intelligent, responsible and free.” To the question then, What is the cause of my volitions? the answer will be, *I* am the cause. *I will*. Here WILL, properly speaking, transcends causality, as cause is usually understood. God making me, in this respect, like himself, gives me the power to will. *I* exert that power, I WILL. How this freedom consists with divine sovereignty can be just as well explained, as how free will on any theory can consist with divine sovereignty. There is a

mystery in the relations of the will, which no human being has discovered, nor probably will discover.

With many shades of difference, however, our theology embraces two prominent classes, Calvinian and Edwardean; or, if any prefer it, New England. The one class holds to necessity, though not without liberty; the other to liberty, though not without necessity. The prominence which is given to the doctrine of necessity over the doctrine of liberty, or to the doctrine of liberty over the doctrine of necessity, where each is held either in priority or in subordination, characterizes the two great schools of Calvinistic American dogmatics. These philosophical dicta form two theological centres, around either of which the generally received principles of metaphysical divinity may be arranged, constituting, when completed, two systems, consisting of nearly the same materials, and differing chiefly not in substance, but in form and expression.

Now the point on which I wish to insist is this: in unessential diversity preserve essential unity. Let our theologians be zealous for the truth, and maintain all the great principles of Christianity as grounds of fellowship. But when you come to such questions as these, whether the will should embrace in its definition the affections, or is a faculty distinct from and the proper controller of them; whether man sinned in Adam, as being constructively present with him, and so constructively accountable, or whether he sinned only as the consequence of a disordered physical and moral constitution derived from our fallen progenitors; whether every act of the mind is a direct act of sovereign efficiency, yet

so that man is completely accountable, or whether man originates his own acts and puts forth moral volitions without necessity, yet so that he acts only according to the foreknowledge and predetermination of God ; on these, and such like questions, about which the same person, without loss of orthodoxy, is liable to take different views at different periods of his life, and upon some of which it is doubtful whether any eminent theologian, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Edwards, not excepted, has ever maintained, at all times, obvious consistency with himself ; questions, on which the wisest and most godly men have differed from the wisest and most godly men, and been wise and godly men still ; questions, on which the greatest preachers of righteousness have taken opposite positions to the greatest preachers of righteousness, and have turned many souls unto righteousness notwithstanding ;—I say, on these and such like questions, let the scholarship of our churches contend as desperately as it will, but so long as Luther and Calvin and Knox can be supposed to sing in the same heavenly choirs with Baxter and Doddridge and Watts ; so long as our new divinity and our old divinity shall both claim Jonathan Edwards as a champion and father ; so long as our orthodox body holds with common tenacity to the great doctrines of redemption, whatever views they may take of the metaphysical dogmas on which they prefer to expound them ; so long as the Baxterian rule is received as a rule of charity, “ Unite in necessary truths and tolerate tolerable failings,” let us keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

Generous controversy does no harm. It sharpens the faculties. It strikes out new thoughts and relations of thought. It gives freshness and vitality to old truths. It stirs the fountains of knowledge, and, like the heaving sea, keeps them pure. I cannot doubt that just this diversity, this earnest discussion, this vigorous application of thought to hard problems, is important to the highest efficiency of any large theological connection. Says one of the most evangelical among recent Germans, (Lechler's Idea of Rel. Bib. Sac. Apr. 1852,) "An exact mathematical equivalence of several forces working together in a life, would be the destruction of the very idea of life. Working and counter-working, attraction and repulsion, *opposition*, is essential to life. But where there is opposition, there is no unconditional equilibrium," and so there is a condition favorable to life.

Let, then, our theological chivalry display its prowess; let our knights-errant do battle for the nice forms and shades of truth; let our champions tilt and unhorse each other, and roll together in the dirt for mastery, if they will. But let them not forget the laws of honorable strife while the conflict rages; and when the fray is over, like generous combatants, let them shake each other by the hand, brush the dust from each other's coat, and love the better for that tug of war. Discussion, earnest, searching, protracted, is well. But it is a serious question, whether, on subjects so abstract that few can grasp them, it should not be confined chiefly to the higher theological journals and to circles where it can be appreciated. While every minister expounds his

own views to his own people according to his conscience, is it necessary that the peace of the churches should be disturbed by the mad-dog cry of heresy, or the promulgation of theological jealousy? Why unsettle the common mind, by words which, to the mass of Christians, are words without knowledge? What is old school or new school to them, provided they can recognize in their teachers the school of Jesus? We have seen one great denomination in this country rent asunder on kindred questions! Why should we hazard the harmony of our own? The sin of schism is not by any means the smallest in the catalogue of transgressions! True, we are in no immediate danger of disruption. But is not this a subject on which we need a caution? Blessed are the peace-makers; and wo to them by whom offences come.

2. It may be well for us to take more of an attractive and less of a repellant attitude towards theological oppositionists, especially towards that part of the old Congregational connection which has been now, for many years, substantially, separated from us. How religious sentiment came to deteriorate on the soil of the Pilgrims, and how the elements of separation were introduced among us, I have no time to narrate. The history of this controversy involves causes which lie far back in the history of the country: among them are the half-way covenant, the revolutionary war, and the prevalence of sensational philosophy.

But passing over the origin of the conflict, the fierce strife itself has not died out of memory. The recklessness with which old opinions were assailed;



the exile of churches from their Sabbath homes ; communion furniture passing, under the forms of law, into the hands of those who had all along stood out of the pale of the covenant ; pastors gathering their broken and disheartened flocks into school-houses, into private dwellings, or under the shades of a tree ; aged ministers standing on the steps of their church doors, bolted out by some to whom they had preached for almost half a century ; — these things survive in the recollections of many a wounded spirit, and it may be they have produced an aversion, a hardness of manner, a repellant, on our part, unfavorable to conviction.

But we must remember not only the spirit of forgiveness which was inculcated from the cross, but that years have already produced a change. A natural but powerful reaction has commenced. A new generation are coming upon the stage. The Unitarian mind is also better understood ; its real difficulties are more fully appreciated ; and new modes of defending old truths, modes better adapted to the exigencies of the times, have been discovered and applied. A revival of evangelical sentiment and feeling has taken place. The theology of Boston, and the whole eastern part of the Commonwealth, has undergone a revolution. At no time, since the sixteenth century, have the doctrines of grace put themselves forth with more vigor, either upon the educated or the common mind, in any space of equal limits, than in our immediate region within the last twenty or thirty years. The wrongs we suffered were a benefit to us. Before 1837, there had sprung into new existence, or after



exile, into revived vitality, nearly a hundred Orthodox churches, in a very short period of time. The power of that impulse is not spent, but still gathers breadth and energy.

In the meanwhile, an encouraging change has taken place in the schools of philosophy. When the Unitarian controversy broke out, the *Essay of Locke on the Understanding*, and the ethical system of Paley, had long borne sway. Priestly, to some extent, was an oracle ; and even Bentham soon had his admirers. Locke and Paley furnished text-books for our colleges, and maintained almost universal authority on the subjects of which they treat. Without disparaging the piety of these two great men, it cannot be denied that the tendency of the principles they inculcated, as received by the most influential minds, was to move God away from the soul, substitute selfishness for disinterested love, diminish accountability, and, by an all-pervading materialism, degrade man in the scale of being. When the infant mind was supposed to be as blank as an unwritten leaf, entirely destitute, before sensation, of all germs of thought and germs of character ; when no ideas could find admission to the soul except through the senses, and the Creator himself had to be served only for hire, is it strange, that throughout the walks of human wisdom the intense spiritualism of the Scriptures should have become foolishness. Under these circumstances, it could hardly be imagined that a single dogma of our ancient creeds would retain its undisputed ascendancy. On the intellectual system of Locke, the doctrines of the trinity, of native depravity, of

supernatural regeneration, of Deity becoming incarnate, were easily assailed, and, except by the Scriptures, not so easily defended ; while, on the ethical system of Paley, to love God disinterestedly and to act with unselfish regard to his glory, was a natural impossibility. It shows how strong must have been the religious sentiment of New England, and how powerful the hold of the sacred Scriptures on the public mind, that the old forms of doctrines were not entirely swept away.

Next to the Almighty, nothing has so much power over communities as a philosophic principle. Discovered and promulgated by a single master-spirit, received and inculcated by the scholars and public teachers of society, interwoven with every new production in morals, in theology, in literature even, it soon takes possession of the more cultivated minds, and gradually permeates the whole mass of the people.

Here, then, we have encouragement. Among the great revolutions of the last twenty years, none have been greater than the revolution in philosophy. Locke and Priestly, and the archdeacon of Carlisle, have lost their supremacy, at least in the class of minds now under consideration ; and instead of sensationalism and utility, the idealistic and the mystic schools have become lord of the ascendant. Pure idealism finds no absurdity in the doctrine of a triune God, and though self-deifying in some of its tendencies and prone to Pantheism, shrinks not from a real incarnation ; while philosophical mysticism, though sometimes excessive in its development and often uncertain as to its foundations, readily

coalesces with the mysteries of our religion. Theology expands when overlooking the phenomenal ; it has to do with the absolute and the infinite. The old exclamations,—absurd, contrary to reason, opposed to all experience and common sense,—lose their power ; and the human mind is conducted into the vast temple of invisibles, where it has intuition of God and communion with truth.

There are other changes, tending to the same result. False principles have been pressed to their conclusions. The school of liberalism, whose foundation is *doubt*, and whose grand mission seemed to be not to fulfil but to destroy, had urged its reckless way to the very edge of the infidel abyss, and some of its valiant ones had actually plunged in before the more conservative appeared to foresee the danger. But the eyes of many have been opened, and that has partly come to pass which our fathers foretold. There are, perhaps, three schools of Unitarians. One has passed over into the foggy regions of Pantheism ; another seems to be returning to the faith of the Fathers. Weary of disbelieving and pulling down, many of the middle section appear anxious to reconstruct a theological system ; and from present indications, and from the probabilities, not to say necessities, of the case, such a reconstruction can never be completed on any basis of Scripture, without a large admixture of evangelical sentiment.

A new spirit has sprung up in portions of this denomination. Both among clergy and laity, there are many persons totally dissatisfied with the attitude of opposition towards the principles and feel-

ings which the piety of the church has held sacred for eighteen hundred years, and with the unbelief and uncertainty and indifferentism which prevails around them. There is, in some quarters, a tender religious susceptibility, a deep longing after something more spiritual, positive and certain, an earnest and apparently candid spirit of inquiry, and, in some instances, a peculiar experience of divine things which augurs good. The press, as well as the parlor, verifies these remarks. From an almost thirty years' familiar acquaintance with the class of minds under consideration, I think I speak advisedly, as I am sure I speak sincerely, when I say that, to some extent, there has been a great change for the better, and the future seems hopeful.

The class of religionists of whom I have been speaking, however far error may have carried them away, are not without qualities adapted to interest a cultivated and a Christian mind. Whatever may be said of the more vulgar admixture which has found affinities amongst them, the denomination embraces no common share of respectability, of intelligence, of accomplishment, and of generous and amiable virtues. No class adhere with more tenacity and joy to the doctrines of the cross, when once converted to them, and no class has greater advantages for promoting their dissemination.

It may be well for us also to remember the Puritan traditions and the Congregational polity which we hold in common. Many of the old churches, though the good old forms of sound words have long since ceased to resound therein, retain hallowed associations which will have powerful influence on

the present and succeeding generations. It is characteristic of religion to repeat itself in society, after periods of declension, and to assume again its pristine beauty. So it will be here ; and as the departure was gradual, the return will not be consummated in a moment. When we come to feel as did the Apostle, when he said, ‘ I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, for my kinsmen according to the flesh,’ then, doubtless, the branches broken off by unbelief will be rapidly grafted into their own olive tree again. In the meanwhile, what is to be expected on our part ? Not indifference to the utter insufficiency and perilous tendency of Unitarianism, not compromises of principles, not concealment of what is offensive in our creeds. Policy, as well as honesty, requires that we show our colors ; that we maintain the truth in its full force ; that we stand up boldly for the right. But something besides stiffness and argument is necessary to persuasion. Conviction depends much upon the feelings.\* We may not coquet with error, or make improper concessions. But among some there may be some change of manner. Instead of haughty reserve, there may be sympathy. Denunciation may be exchanged for invitation, and holy hate for holy love.

3. It will be our wisdom, more than we have ever yet done, to encourage learning. I have no reference here to common schools, of which every true New Englander, of course, is a zealous patron.

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\* Plura enim, says the author de oratore, multo homines judicant odio, aut amore, aut cupiditate, aut iracundia, aut dolore, aut laetitia, aut spe, aut timore, aut errore, aut aliqua permotione mentis, quam veritate, aut præscripto, aut juris norma aliqua, aut judicii formula, aut legibus.—(*De Oratore, Lib. Secundus, 42.*)



Nor have I forgotten what a multitude of the higher educational establishments, sustained by orthodox liberality, crown our land. But with these concessions, it must be confessed, that in the means of thorough professional or general scholarship, the new world is altogether behind the old. We may have some as learned men as Great Britain or the European continent can furnish. But they are learned in spite of disadvantages. Among all our colleges and theological seminaries, is it extravagant to say that not one of them is adequately endowed? Foundations for professorships, for aiding young men in preparation for the ministry, or for superior philosophical training, are few and wholly insufficient. With all that has been done, by collegiate and theological endowments, by private munificence, by our education societies, we have as yet no adequate means for developing Christian talent. We need hundreds and thousands of scholars more than we have, to fill our pulpits and chairs of theology, and other important offices in church and state. In public libraries, without which there can rarely be great scholarship, we are exceedingly deficient. The largest library in the United States, the library at Cambridge, has but a little over 90,000 volumes. This estimate embraces the Law, Medical and Theological libraries, and those belonging to the literary societies among the undergraduates. The library in Williams College, including the society libraries of the students, had in 1850 but about 11,000 volumes.\* The library in Amherst College, including 7,000 volumes belonging to society libraries,

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\* Bib. Sac. July, 1850, p. 607.



had only 12,000 volumes. These are favorable specimens of the collegiate libraries in New England. Our theological libraries are hardly more extended. According to the statistics of 1850, Andover has but 17,000 volumes and Bangor 8,000. Compare this statement with some of the libraries in Europe. Munich has two libraries, the smallest containing 160,000 volumes, the other 600,000 volumes. The Royal Library at Berlin numbers 500,000 volumes, the Bodleian Library in Oxford 220,000 volumes, and the National Library at Paris 820,000 volumes.\*

These are but specimens of the means furnished for profound study in the European world. The German governments expend large sums every year for the support of those great universities which are their care and pride; for instance, in 1836, the University of Berlin received from the public treasury \$64,000, Bonn about \$50,000, Breslaw \$27,000, Halle \$42,000.†

Where are the sums which our own governments have expended for many years past upon the colleges and theological seminaries of New England? Echo answers *where?* True, there is a reason for this difference between our republican methods of cherishing learning, and those of states which lean on an established religion for support. But the apology does not alter the fact. We must have larger endowments for our literary institutions, especially must we have books. The whole literature of the country does not furnish means for the composition of a thorough ecclesiastical history; and

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\* North American Review, July, 1850. † Bib. Sac. April, 1851, p. 262.

there is scarcely an important branch of research, in this great department of sacred knowledge, which can be *thoroughly* investigated, even had one in his possession all the libraries in the United States.\*

If any suppose that extensive general knowledge may be a sufficient offset for profound study in particular directions, let them remember that what may be true in the humbler walks of our profession, cannot be true, at least, among the educators of the educated. The highest Christian influence has never existed, since the days of the Apostles, in any country not distinguished for its learned men. Whatever may be said of the individual minister, devoting the entire energies of his mind and heart to the immediate 'cure of souls', there must be those, in a successful connection, who are able to investigate the deepest questions, and meet the most learned errorists, on their own grounds. Knowledge is power; truth, next to God, is omnipotent; and we should allow ourselves to be shorn of strength, if we should permit the enemies of Christ to be wiser than his friends. Nor does the importance of cultivating learning, even more than heretofore, terminate with those who occupy the high places of our profession. Probably the ministry of America is the best educated ministry in the world;

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\* The nature of the importance here attached to large public libraries is liable to be misapprehended. They are by no means necessary for undergraduates, whose time should be chiefly occupied with the regular studies of their class. But a college is the literary centre of an extensive region. The educated men in all the country round are expected to resort to it for purposes of investigation, and the composition of important works, and the professors are to be supplied in it with the means for thorough research in their several departments.

and of the comparative standing of the Orthodox Congregationalists, in this respect, I need not say a word. But a still more careful preparatory training, a still more general habit of daily study throughout one's whole ministerial life, would add not a little to ministerial efficiency. We deal in our congregations with strong minds, with intelligent minds, with minds which *will* be fed with *knowledge* as well as grace, or loathe the light food which their shepherds furnish. A revived scholarship throughout the ministry, provided that scholarship were sanctified, would be *next*, as an element of moral power, to what we commonly denominate the special influences of the Holy Spirit.

Let us then encourage learning in its higher forms. Let us enlighten the wealth of our Christianity, that rich men of intelligence may be induced to endow our colleges and theological seminaries; to furnish more abundant means for the education of sanctified talent; to procure enlarged libraries, which, like the great reservoirs of Croton and Cochituate, shall not only supply the deepest thirst of a few, but bear the refreshing currents down to every private home. As a denomination, we greatly need a Congregational Library, which should gather in the scattered works of the Fathers before they are forever lost, and collect books which should illustrate our history and lead us to a more perfect appreciation of a system under which we have so signally flourished. But, most of all, we need a revived spirit of study, especially the study of scripture passages and scripture principles, that our pulpits may command respect, enlighten and

invigorate the public, stand as strong bulwarks against error, and more vigorously promote the up-building of the kingdom of Christ.

Were there time, I would urge the importance of efforts to bring the pecuniary talent of the church into more systematic and efficient action; that our great enterprises might be more generously sustained, and the machinery of Christian benevolence now in operation become more powerful. I would urge the importance of preserving that wise medium between conservatism and reform, which tends to secure public confidence. This principle has always characterized the Orthodox Congregationalists generally, and of late years has greatly increased their influence. I would urge the importance of adhering closely to the Sacred Scriptures as the staple of preaching, indoctrinating the people, and making the word of God in all cases the judge that ends the strife. I would insist, especially, that we endeavor to be examples of the religion which we preach, in blameless lives, in honorable actions, and in the practice of all the Christian virtues; that by prayer and meditation and self-denial, we come into harmony with God, and through the fellowship of the Spirit grow strong. I would also urge upon every minister a personal responsibility in reference to the injunction, Go forward. "Little is it understood," says the most recent of our great philosophers, "that *one mind* going forth into the world, with an intense realization of the spiritual, armed with the deepest subjective convictions of truth, and cherishing a calm but piercing faith, instead of a vague educational belief, will do more for the church

and for the world than a thousand minds valiant only for a system." (Hist. of Mod. Phil. p. 706.) In still stronger terms, says the Apostle, *I* can do all things through Christ strengthening me.

But what we need, more than every thing else, is an unction from the Holy One. We need that brokenness of heart which breaks the heart of others. In Paul's preaching there were unforced tears, and so there were in Shepherd's, in Whitefield's, in Brainerd's, in Nettleton's, in Payson's. When they spoke, congregations melted. Truth became a reality, and God very, *very* near. We need more tenderness, and more of those deep, subdued emotions, which sometimes bow a congregation to the earth. We need more of the real and realized presence of the Spirit of God. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and on all our ministers and on all our churches, let the skies pour down righteousness.

In view of the position of the Congregational body, thus set forth, if its proper mission should be duly regarded and attention paid to those things on which progress depends, what hinders a true minister from making impressions on the community where he labors, deep as the channels of thought and lasting as eternity? What hinders that through our Congregational order, aided by other denominations, the whole region, and large sections of the heathen world, should become as a well-watered garden?

We have been contemplating, my brethren, the Congregational Church. I look upon its apostolic



origin ; upon its principles of Christian independence and liberty ; upon its stirring, renovating doctrines ; upon its few, and simple, and touching forms ; upon its history ; upon its resources ; upon its energy ; upon the names which illumine its past ; upon the sons and daughters which adorn its present ; upon the saints which, ascending from it, still hover over it, with ADMIRATION ! I look upon it, in its present condition, not indeed as a perfect communion, but second to no other since the old martyrs and confessors ascended to heaven in chariots of fire. I look upon the church of the future, spreading its wide-embracing arms to receive the unnumbered chosen of God, the dear mother-church of millions yet unborn. "From the top of the rocks I see it, and from the hills I behold it ; lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob and number the fourth part of Israel ? How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. As the valleys are they spread forth ; as gardens by the river's side ; as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedars beside the waters."

And I behold not only "the church that waiteth" for the Lord, or shall wait for him, but "the church that surroundeth him." "There dwells the theme of Klopstock's holy hymns, the incarnate God, that suffered to redeem." And among the multitudes of the adoring, I think of Shepherd and Eliot, of Edwards and Brainerd, of Worcester and Evarts, of Dwight and Huntington and Greene, of Net-

tleton and Payson and Wisner, of Harriet Newell and sister saints, who died for Jesus on foreign shores.

“Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.”

I see the constellation thickening and brightening with its starry multitudes. I hear their “saintly shout and solemn jubilee” coming down from that unbuilt temple,

“Where the bright seraphim, in burning row,  
Their loud, uplifted angel-trumpets blow ;  
And the cherubic host in thousand choirs,  
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,  
With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,  
Hymns devout and holy psalms  
Singing everlastingly.”

In the pauses of their mighty song, I see them bending, I hear them saying, Come up hither. The attractions of that great globe of light and love are on us. We approach the shores of immortality ; the bells of eternity are tolling ; they call us to our prayers, to our toils, to our ministrations, for ourselves and for our churches, and for mankind, by the great examples of our history, by motives which move the heavens, ever saying, as they toll, Come, come, come, come up hither ! Brethren, FORWARD.



6  
THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE.

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A S E R M O N,

BY SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D.

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TRANSFERRED FROM THE "NATIONAL PREACHER."





## XV.

## THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE.\*

BY SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, D.D.,

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"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 Cor. x. 3-5.

In the "lively oracles," both earlier and later, "the knowledge of God" denotes or implies true religion. As used by the apostles, it is but another expression for the Gospel, or "the truth as in Jesus." Evidence of this we have in the text, and in many other passages of the New Testament.

"The knowledge of God," important as it is to the welfare of man, both in this life and the future, has never had free course. "The carnal mind," because of its "enmity against God," has desperately resisted "the grace that bringeth salvation, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."—With a very obvious, if not also a peculiarly impressive significance, in the times of Paul, the self-denying and perilous exertions and exposures of himself and other followers of Christ were represented as a "warfare,"—themselves, as "soldiers,"—their means of operation and defence, as "swords" and "helmets,"—and even the "Prince of Peace,"—their Leader and Lord—as the "Captain of Salvation."

What the apostle intended by "strongholds" is partially intimated by what he says of "imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." There can be no doubt, that he comprehends in this description all the vain speculations, conceits, devices, and pretences of self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, and self-delusion; in short, everything which can be arrayed in opposition to "the truth of God and the faith of Jesus."

And how did he and his associates prosecute their "warfare" against "spiritual wickedness?" Although "in the flesh," and therefore subject to many and great infirmities and temptations, they did not strive to obtain their "incorruptible crown," or to accomplish

\* Preached before the Massachusetts Pastoral Association, at Boston, May 28th, 1850.  
AUG.

any of their purposes, by means or instrumentalities, which are congenial to selfishness and ungodliness. "For," as he affirms, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." It is evident, that he means as if he had said,—we attempt no coercion or violence. No fraud, no self-aggrandizement, no corruption of the word of God, can be laid to our charge. We may indeed invoke miraculous judgments in vindication of our despoiled authority. But we much prefer to "beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," and to speak with far less of assurance, than would become us, of the "authority which the Lord hath given for *edification*, and not for *destruction*."

Laying aside the metaphors of the text, I propose to specify and illustrate the principal means, by which the great apostle so successfully labored to promote the Gospel of the grace of God; and by which he became so pre-eminently a model for the "ministry of reconciliation" among all people and throughout all ages,—until the last message of redeeming love shall be delivered in the name of Jesus.

1. The apostle labored to promote the Gospel, *by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice.*

As in the material, so in the moral world, when "God said, Let there be light, there was light, and God divided the light from the darkness." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" shone into the heart of Saul of Tarsus. The doctrine of Christ and him crucified, like Christ himself, was to him no longer "without form or comeliness." He saw in clearness and resplendence the amazing "mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,"—the way of salvation by a sincere, penitential faith in the blood of the cross. It was not an airy, misty, shadowy, undefined, and undefinable something or somewhat; but it was "the word of life," which could be "seen," be "looked upon," and be "handled."

When, therefore, Paul went out to preach to his fellow-men, he carried with him a FORM OF DOCTRINE, which he could publish and "deliver," as such, to all who became the disciples of his Master. It was a "form of sound words," which the faithful could "hold fast" unto death. It was "truth," and *the* truth, in a reality and with a blessedness, of which he had sure and most ennobling experience. In all things he thus had an incalculable advantage, in encountering the philosophy of the schools, and vulgar superstition, whether associated with the bewildering traditions of the Jew, or the debasing mythologies of the Gentile. He could edify, or build up, as well as demolish and destroy.

His faith did not consist in "*not* believing." His creed was neither a summary of negatives, nor of disclaimers. He could announce to all men everywhere, as "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" for the LIVING God, who made heaven and earth, "gave

his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In few words he could answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Or he could discuss the great doctrines of justification by faith, and of atonement, in elaborate treatises, as in the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews. In either case he had something positive, substantial, real, visible, and tangible. He was neither a pantheist, nor a mystic, a transcendentalist nor an enthusiast.

2. It may next be remarked, that Paul labored to promote the Gospel, *by publishing it as indispensable to salvation, and as freely offered to all.*

It made no difference, whether he was addressing Jews or Greeks, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. He "preached Christ" to all, as the only Saviour from "the wrath to come." No one, however, could better have known the first impressions of the story of the cross,—especially upon minds of the higher cast, both in activity and attainment. The intellectual habits, and the moral associations of those in the great cities of wealth, learning, luxury, and pride, in which most of all the apostles preached,—gave them ideas of dogmatical and irresponsible self-consequence, and predisposed them in large masses to repel with ineffable scorn the uncompromising and humbling claims of Christ and him crucified. Yet in all places and among all people, without the least respect of persons, he proclaimed the "Gospel of Christ, as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, *then were all dead!* Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. . . . God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

He knew, that "of God Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,—that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." He knew and felt most deeply, that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And hence it was, that, while willing to be himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, he laid to their charge as the sin above all their sins, that of "*forbidding*" him "*to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved.*"

As a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," he had himself sought righteousness and heaven by the deeds of the law. His eyes had been shut, and had then been opened to see, that no man on earth was ever so justified and saved. Ruined and helpless—as a man weltering in his own heart's blood,—Jesus Christ was revealed to him, as "the



end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Such now was the transformation of his views and feelings, such the inward and transporting witness of the remedial efficacy of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, that he was as sure as of his being, that whosoever believeth hath eternal life, beyond all possibility of disappointment and shame. The great problem of "glory and virtue" had been solved by the revelation of the Son of God; and not a shadow of a doubt remained, that, by faith in his name, the regenerated soul would have the victory over death and hell, and be crowned with spotless and immortal righteousness. And although at Antioch, in Pisidia, he could not refrain from "shaking off the dust of his feet," as a solemn and awful testimony in the name of Christ, against the "despisers," who "beheld" to "wonder and perish;" yet did he stand forth before all the world, as himself the "chief of sinners," and "a pattern" for the effectual persuasion of all the anxious and the agonized, on account of sin and the second death, that, not for a moment might they despair of pardon and life, if they would but remember the abounding mercy of the Lord Jesus to him, who was before "a blasphemer and a persecutor."

3. Paul labored to promote the Gospel, it may further be remarked, by *publishing it in simplicity*.

Having "neither received it of man, nor was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," he preached it as he also received it. He had no improvements to make upon Jesus Christ. He discarded all the philosophy of the world, as "vain," because "foolishness with God." The truths of Christianity he cordially embraced *as facts*, in regard to which he was not authorized to raise "doubtful disputations," any more than "foolish questions." All admixtures of mere reason or imagination he vigilantly shunned, although the chief of the apostles, and accomplished in all the learning of his age.

Capable of efforts of oratory, which were not unnoticed by Longinus, in his illustrations of the sublime, and in connection with such names as Demosthenes, it must have been sheer malice or nothing better, which prompted some of the Corinthians to say of him, that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." But well aware of the taste of that ancient Paris, the city of Corinth, and of the fascination of rhetorical brilliancies of expression and factitious accomplishments of delivery, he there appears to have been more than ever solicitous to *keep himself behind the cross*, and to commend the simple, the pure, and undefiled doctrine of Christ to every man's conscience. Yet he could never have had a greater temptation to avail himself of what was accounted "excellency of speech," or the "enticing words of man's wisdom."

It may occur to you, however, and should not be forgotten here, that in no epistles of Paul is there so much of genuine classical perfection of style, as in those to *the Corinthians*. That fifteenth

chapter of his first Epistle is unsurpassed in every quality of chaste and terse, elegant and energetic, beautiful and sublime composition. Still you cannot fail to perceive, that, in all his matter and in all his manner of discourse, he betrays no ambition or desire to be praised and honored by the ungodly, whether learned or illiterate, noble or ignoble ; but was ever aiming with most unfeigned solicitude to win souls to Christ, that CHRIST might have all the glory.

In the providence of God, the language of Greece—the richest of all languages of the heathen world, and that most extensively spoken in the Roman empire, at the time of “the beginning of the Gospel”—was made the repository and the vehicle of the message of the Redeemer’s love to uncounted millions. But even the peerless language of Homer and Plato, of Herodotus and Euripides, was inadequate, without much “private interpretation,” to express every “truth as in Jesus,” in its various forms and connections, so that there should be no mode or degree of unintelligibility or obscurity. Hence Peter had occasion to say, that there were “some things hard to be understood” in the epistles of his “beloved brother Paul ;” —whether or not his “beloved brother Paul” might have indulged in a similar fraternal criticism upon his own.

But whatever there may be in the style of Paul, which may have obscured his meaning, at the time of his personal ministration, and which cannot now be fully elucidated, we may be very certain, that the difficulty could never have arisen from an affectation of originality, or of depth of thought, or from any artistic structure or embellishment. We may concede, that parts of his Epistles are quite dark, if not impenetrable ; yet, as compared with the whole, they are like the solar spots, and would, perhaps, entirely disappear, if it were not for the dark places in the hearts and in “the eyes” of the “understanding,” not only of believers generally, but also of the very best Christian expositors. So clear, so effulgent are the cardinal principles and the essential doctrines which he taught, that our Sabbath School children may understand them, and be “wise unto salvation.” No one who heard Paul preach, or read what he wrote, need to have “perished for lack of knowledge.” On the contrary, “leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” he might “go on to perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

4. Another means by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel, was that of *publishing it in godly sincerity*.

He really believed what he preached. His whole manner of preaching and of living was a demonstration of the genuineness, the cordiality of his personal faith in the doctrine of Christ. He “bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus,” and so lived unto his Saviour and Lord, that he was dead unto the world. No selfish or secular end whatever could have furnished him the slightest

motive to do or to suffer what he did, in publishing the word of salvation. He could thus appeal to his "manner of life," as a decisive witness of his godly sincerity.

"Our rejoicing is this," he says to the Corinthians, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge even unto the end. . . . Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully." "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel,"—said he to the elders of Ephesus. "And ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." To the Thessalonians he wrote,—“Our exhortation was not from deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness: God is witness. Nor from men sought we glory, neither from you, neither from others. . . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believed; and how we exhorted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.”

The peculiar impressiveness of this appeal may be lost upon those, who should happen to forget or fail to be reminded, that many have a character of excellence *in public*, which belongs not to their private walks, and is unknown among the observers of their daily life. He who could say,—“I have *wronged* no man, I have *corrupted* no man, I have *defrauded* no man,”—“*ye are witnesses* and God also how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves *among you that believe*,” must have been a man who, amidst the abounding corruptions and impurities of the times, would have endured the scrutiny of fire upon fire. And this character of untarnished righteousness, of incorruptible honesty and sincerity, must have imparted, to all his preaching of the Gospel of the Holy One and the Just, a power and a charm of conviction and persuasion, which neither Isocrates nor Tully, nor Quintilian, could have ever imagined in all their grandest conceptions of the moral worth of “the good man”—irreproachable purity of life,—as the crowning perfection of consummate oratory.

5. The *earnestness* of Paul was another means, by which he labored so effectively in promoting the Gospel.

I cannot here withhold a reference to a fact of unwritten biography, which the subject in this view very forcibly recalls to my mind. While pursuing my studies at the neighboring University,



there was a fellow-student from one of the opulent families of the South. For some months, he was reported to be in a state of partial derangement, and was at length obliged to leave his class. Whatever instructions he may have received in childhood, it afterwards appeared from very unexpected disclosures of his history, that he was almost an entire stranger to the Scriptures. Before leaving his class, and while much depressed in spirits—craving relief he knew not what—he one day took up a Bible, or his Greek Testament. He soon found himself attracted and absorbed by the “Acts of the Apostles,” in which Luke has so graphically described the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and narrated the more important events and incidents of his subsequent career. He became intensely interested in the character of Paul, *as a character*. The more he read of him, the more his admiration increased. And if I do not greatly err in memory, it was *the earnestness* of Paul, more than any other characteristic, which deeply affected his heart, and was blessed of God to his ultimate conversion. In all his life, as he thought, he had never found a man with a *soul* like that of Paul; so *earnestly* devoted to his God, and to the work of spreading the knowledge of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.\*

And is it strange, that he should have been so affected? Who can now read of Paul in those delineations of his fellow-laborer, and in his own writings, without seeing that he was indeed *in earnest*, like a man, who felt to the very utmost power of emotion, and not seldom to agony, that to those who perished, he was a savor of death unto death; but to those that were saved, of life unto life! Neither the “love that passeth knowledge,” nor “the terrors of the Lord” could ever languish sleepily upon his tongue! *In earnest* he always was: and sometimes, as before Felix, “*terribly* in earnest.”

His mode of reasoning very strikingly displays this element of character and of power. Let him take any point to argue, and however systematic may be his plan, or important the regularity of the succession of his positions or facts, he proceeds but a little way, before he seems to forget that he is reasoning, and breaks out in some burst of glowing exclamation or appeal. His reasoning is always “logic set on fire,”—and fire so powerful, as to threaten to burn off the very strongest links of the chain of the argument.

But in all his earnestness, you see no proof of mere animal excitement, or of extravagance and enthusiasm. It was emotion, inspired legitimately by the realities of the great and the glorious theme, which enkindled and exalted his soul. And hence, we cannot doubt, that it was with an overwhelming moral dignity and grandeur, that he replied to Festus:—“I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness!”

\* It would not be proper to say more. The facts were not known, until after the student had left Cambridge; and it is doubtful whether any of the officers of the University were ever aware of what the writer has here ventured to record.

6. The *boldness* of Paul may next be specified, as a means by which he endeavored to promote the Gospel.

Hardly had the scales fallen from his eyes at Damascus, after "the heavenly vision," before he "entered the synagogues," and "preached Christ that HE IS THE SON OF GOD. All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" When subsequently he went to Jerusalem, "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had *preached boldly* at Damascus, in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And *he spake boldly* in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him."

As he began, so he continued. Surely he was not unapprised of the scorn and the obloquy, the scourgings, imprisonments, and deaths, which everywhere threatened the heralds of the cross of Calvary. Beside the vivid suggestions of his own experience, while "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"—suggestions which would be sufficient to dishearten any man who had not the fortitude and the courage of the noblest in the army of the martyrs,—we find, that, at the very outset of his ministry for Christ, he received *a revelation of suffering*, no less than of salvation. While Ananias was hesitating to perform the service, to which a vision directed him,—thinking it impossible, that Saul of Tarsus had become a man of prayer in spirit and in truth,—"Go thy way," said the Lord: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. *For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*"

It was then in full view of all his liabilities to reproach, and ignominy, and torture, and frightful martyrdom, that he went through all the populous cities, the marts of commerce, and the seats of opulence and learning,—preaching boldly the gospel of the kingdom of the Son of God. If men of the highest rank ridiculed his doctrine, and scoffed at his warnings, they could never have raised a blush upon his cheek. He could say to all, I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL. He could "weep in secret places for their pride," like the prophet of Lamentations; but no reproach or reviling could have ever caused him to appear "with confusion of face." Never did he flee for his life, or hide himself, because he feared death in any of its terrors; for he was always "ready, not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Beyond a question, his appeal to those elders of Ephesus was applicable to all, whom he had been permitted to address according to his heart's desire. "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." He neither disguised the truth, nor

withheld any truth, nor neutralized the truth, that he might make his doctrine more agreeable to the depraved taste of the carnal mind. In the conclusion of his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus,—written when he was in chains,—is the memorable exhortation, to “put on the whole armor of God, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for *me*,” it is added, “that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel; for which I am an ambassador in bonds, *that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.*”

7. If Paul was distinguished for *boldness*, he was no less remarkable for the *meekness* and *humility*, with which also he labored to promote the Gospel.

Fierce as he was, before he became a new man, he was so transformed into the image of Christ, that it might be said of him most truly, that he was “meek and lowly in heart.” He could suffer injuries without any desire of revenge; and whatever trials might come upon him, it was all well, if the power of Christ was present with him for his strength of consolation. The remembrance of what he once was, while a destroyer of the faith, and the consciousness of the unspeakable mercy which had been bestowed upon him, disarmed him of all asperity, and subdued all his haughtiness. This we are fully warranted to believe, from his words and his example. Still it was true, that he insisted firmly and indomitably upon a recognition of his rights, as a Roman citizen, and withstood even Simon Peter to the face, when he was justly “to be blamed.”

Far and wide did Paul preach the gospel, with signal and signalized success. Yet he never speaks of his distinction in this respect, as if disposed to bring himself into notice. Upon one occasion he said,—“I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.” It was when compelled for the honor of Christ to vindicate himself against the outrageous aspersions of those, who craftily and shamelessly endeavored to undermine and destroy his influence in a church, for which he had toiled with such self-sacrificing endurance. The same remark will apply to other expressions of a similar nature. Vastly more congenial was the language of his first Epistle to that church: “Last of all Christ was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

How admirable the wisdom and the spirit of his charge to Timothy! “O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, *meekness*. . . . Foolish and unlearned



questions [questions indicating both ignorance and folly] avoid, knowing that they gender contentions. And the servant of the Lord must not contend; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient,—in *meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another,” was an injunction to the Romans. To the Colossians also, and to the kindred in Christ generally, he wrote in the style of commandment or exhortation, enforcing the obligations of humility and meekness, upon all classes and orders in the household of faith,—as if these graces of the Christian character were of immeasurable importance. And never could he have written as he did to those who had known him so well, if they had not indubitable evidence, that every word was true when he said: “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things.”

8. We have another and a most important view of the means by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel, when we consider that he always published it, as being made effectual in no other way, than by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Not the slightest hope of success would the apostle have had, were it not that his “speech was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” In every variety of manner, he proclaimed as his joy and exultation, that all the glory of the triumphs and the trophies of the Gospel belonged to his Saviour and his God. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” He never speaks or writes of his success in publishing the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of Christ, but as accomplished by the “Lord working with him,” or as if his unworthy instrumentality would have availed nothing, and less than nothing, if the word preached had not been “mighty through God.” How he rebuked the Corinthians and glorified God, when he said:—“Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord Jesus gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE.”

9. I add, briefly, that Paul published the Gospel, as being made effectual *in answer to fervent prayer*.

From the moment he became convicted of sin, and was enlightened into a knowledge of Christ, he was a man of prayer,—earnest, energetic, effectual prayer. “What wilt thou have me to do?” was his first petition, and we know not but his last. Certain it is, that

from the time his Lord could say of him, "behold he prayeth,"—up to the latest hour of record, we have ample proof that, in enjoining upon the Thessalonians and other Christians, to "pray without ceasing," he enjoined what he himself most sacredly performed.

I know not in how many instances he uses such language as,—  
 "Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." And to what end? "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Again he says to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, *pray for us.*" How he exhorted the Ephesians "to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, that utterance might be given" to him, for a bold and faithful proclamation of "the mystery of the Gospel,"—may here be instructively recalled to memory, in connection with his words to the Colossians. "Continue in prayer, and watch unto the same with thanksgiving. At the same time also praying for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds. *That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.*"

10. I will notice but one other means, by which Paul labored to promote the Gospel. It has been repeatedly implied. He spoke *the truth in love.*

LOVE to God, to Christ, to the brethren, and to sinners, was, beyond all dispute, the predominant, and all-controlling passion of the great apostle to the Gentiles. It glows in every sermon. It beams with celestial brightness in every epistle. I should be glad, if the time permitted, to illustrate each of the modes or elements of the love in the constant exercise of which Paul preached and exemplified "the faith once delivered to the saints." But I will only refer to the "charity," which he has so inimitably portrayed in the 13th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. That chapter was written, it must be borne in mind, when he was in those circumstances of most unreasonable, aggravated, cruel provocation! And where in all the writings of the apostles, is there one chapter more beautiful and tender, in sentiment, feeling, and expression?

When the apostle thus wrote of the "charity" that "suffereth long and is kind. . . . Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil. . . . Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;" can it be doubted by any one among us, that they who had seen the most of the real spirit and the true life of Paul, would at once recognize his own moral likeness? It was because of his own "charity," that he could say of his course among the Thessalonians,—  
 "We were gentle among you even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own



souls, because you were dear unto us." In the same spirit it was, that at Ephesus, "by the space of three years" he "ceased not to warn every man day and night with tears." But even this deeply affecting record is far from doing full justice to him, who could testify of himself, in the Epistle to the Romans:—"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

It is not strange, then, that a man of such spirit should have been so distinguished for his courtesy and urbanity, in his treatment of men of all ranks and conditions; and that he "became all things to all men," consistently with truth and faithfulness,—“that by all means he might save some.” In this connection, however, some may call to mind certain examples of denunciation of opposers of the truth. They must not forget that the apostle refers to the conduct of subtle and malignant, mischievous and incorrigible enemies of all righteousness. And an anathema from one inspired of the Holy Ghost, is no more repugnant to the spirit of love unfeigned, than divine justice is irreconcilable with divine benevolence. Our Lord Jesus denounced the most dreadful woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees, yet wept over the devoted city. And Paul, while warning the disciples of the Lord against the character and the doom of opposers and apostates, breathed none other than the spirit of Christ. "Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, *even weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, *whose end is destruction*."

I must not enlarge. Much have I omitted, lest I should inexcusably presume upon your indulgence. But I could hardly feel warranted to say less, in exposition of the nature of the "weapons of our warfare,"—our *own* warfare, my brethren, if "we do not war according to the flesh," and if, like Paul, we labor to promote the Gospel, by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice, indispensable to salvation and freely offered to all; publishing it in simplicity and godly sincerity, without the inventions or admixtures, the artifices and embellishments of worldly wisdom, and without false professions to secure honors or emoluments; publishing it with earnestness most intense, as being a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, and with boldness, as that of which none should be ashamed, but which all should be ready to confess and to proclaim in all places; publishing it with meekness and humility, because its most honored champions are themselves but pardoned rebels, and because their preaching is made effectual only by the power of the Holy Ghost, in answer to fervent prayer; and publishing it in love—love to God, love to Christ, love to the Church, love to all men—holy love—universal, unbounded, ever-enduring philanthropy.

These weapons are indeed not carnal. The means by which Paul achieved such triumphs for the honor of Christ Jesus, were of the kingdom which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." From those, who, as the professed friends of Christ, and of souls perishing in sin, would otherwise seek to gain victories and conquests in the empire of the powers of darkness, the cause of our Redeemer needs no assistance. One such warrior in "the good fight of faith," as was Paul, would achieve more than a thousand thousand or a thousand million of them.

And as now we look back from our advanced position, can any distrust the "weapons of our warfare," which were ordained and furnished by Him, who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working?" Did not the ancient "soldiers of the cross" plant the banner of the Prince of Peace and of Life upon the ramparts or the ruins of all the majestic and magnificent structures of idolatry and classic mythology, throughout the almost interminable empire of the Cæsars? what "strongholds" then, from the Arctic circle to the capes of the South Atlantic and Pacific, can be *too* strong for "the sacramental host of God's elect," if they will but take to themselves "the whole armor of God; having their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit?" As ministers at home, or as missionaries abroad—from the river to the ends of the earth,—what more do we need, and what have we to fear, if the truth and Christ be in us, and for us?

If ever for one moment we are tempted to inquire, whether, in "the faith once delivered to the saints," and in "the whole armor of God," we have all that is requisite for the world's emancipation from all its bondage,—let history speak to us, as God's witness in providence. Let it suffice, and more than suffice, to mark the recorded results of all such pretensions and movements, as those of some in our days, who claim to have left the prophets and apostles far behind them, and even to have hope of seeing, as well as heralding, a "better" JESUS, than "Paul preached!!" Such are they, who verily would "turn the world upside down," if large numbers could be infatuated or stultified enough, to embrace their impious and detestable fooleries,—gravely propounded as they are, with so many "goodly words," as reason, freedom, equality, fraternity, progress, happiness, perfection! Let them all throw off the mask, "as the manner of some is," and it is no violation of the "charity" which is of Christ, to say of them, that we should "*see the dragon's nature in their bosom!*"

It would be "a new thing under the sun," for Satan to "cast out Satan." And would that they who have named the name of Christ, and most of all that they who minister in that name, would more

experimentally and faithfully remember that his kingdom *is not of this world*; that, despised as may be the Gospel, it is mighty to the uttermost through Christ's all-sufficiency and almightiness; and that, while bold as lions, the servants of the Lord that bought them, with blood most precious, should ever be wise as serpents and harmless as doves! O if it had always been thus, there could not have been, at this eventful period of the 19th century, so much of the land of promise yet to be possessed—so many millions of heathen in such fearfully dark places of the earth, and who have never heard the name of Jesus, or the first note of the song:—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation!" If, since the farewell charge upon the Mount of Olives, all that have named the name of Christ, had been faithful to his word and spirit, as was Paul, then would they have been to the enemies of the cross "terrible as an army with banners;" and they would have gone forth from conquering to conquer, until long since "every knee" should have been constrained to "bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is, as I humbly conceive, no common responsibility, whatever may be said of the privilege,—which pertains to the office of a minister of the Gospel, in our ancient commonwealth of Massachusetts. May I then be permitted to inquire, to what end we have now come up to this city of the fathers and of the children, at this anniversary of "holy convocation?" What do we here, as ministers of the New Testament,—worthy in any measure of our "high calling,"—if "we seek our own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's;" and if, while participating in these numerous solemnities, we do not find it in our hearts to return to our pulpits and the people of our charge, with a renewed resolution in love stronger than death, that we will PREACH CHRIST more faithfully than ever—as much as in us lies,—by the power "of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" What higher commission than ours can mortals have, from the highest heaven? And who is sufficient for the trust thereof, without Christ and the spirit of Christ, as his light, love, and life?

While he himself, our adorable Master and Saviour, has left us in his own divine ministry—when "in the days of his flesh,"—that human example, which can so far be appropriated and approached, that Paul might say to us,—“Brethren, be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ,”—it is yet an occasion of unspeakable gratitude, that we have the apostle's own undying example, for our instruction, our admonition, and our animating consolation. Can any of us follow him too closely, in any one principle, rule, or characteristic of all those means, by which "Christ wrought" in him, "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed?" Ours is the same Lord, the same Gospel, the same baptism, the same rejoicing hope. Let us, therefore, so preach the Gospel, as we have him for our ex-



ample ; and like him, let us feel that all our sufficiency is of God in Christ, and Christ in our own souls. And to this end, may the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom !

“ If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle ? ” Let no man, then, ever be at a loss to determine what it is that we preach, as the Gospel of Christ ; and let no sincere and kindly-affectioned believer in Jesus ever have occasion for a doubt, that we preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,—as opportunity is given us to magnify our office. Whatever may be the signs of the times ; whatever the aspect of the churches in this “ goodly heritage,” now extended from ocean to ocean ; whatever the encouragements or the discouragements in our immediate sphere of labor and of trial,—whether we have a refreshing from on high, or the love of many waxes cold, and iniquity abounds, and we seem to be in the very region and shadow of death ;—let us still *preach Christ and him crucified*, as the sovereign remedy for all the woes of man, until time shall be no more.

In the spirit and devotedness of Paul, we also should be “ determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” And like him too we should ever in our preaching, spontaneously and impressibly, make manifest our personal and our joyous faith in the Creator and the Crucified as ONE. Ineffectual, utterly ineffectual, for the purposes and the ends of the Christian ministry, will be all our preaching,—if we do not HONOR THE SON EVEN AS THE FATHER ! It will not, it cannot be, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,—witness, if example were needed, the memorable ministrations of Chalmers,—intellectual, accomplished, earnest, and eloquent as he was,—in his fourteen years at Kilmany. It cannot be possible for us to make too much of Christ, in our private and our public life ; or to preach too many sermons *all of Christ*.

We are of course to avoid all appearance and all reality of aim at “ excellency of speech,” as if of men we sought glory. But the beauty of holiness and love in the Gospel is infinitely worthy of the richest and the purest offerings of human genius, learning, and refinement. True it is as ever, according to the sacred description and commendation of eloquence, that “ a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” And we are without excuse,—certainly the most of us,—if we ever prompt a hearer to inquire, whether there be any incompatibility between the requirements of evangelical truth and the laws of good taste ; or, whether any man can be warranted to make the offence of the cross still more an offence to the carnal mind, by a seeming or an actual disregard of those proprieties and attractions of style, in which the original Scriptures excel all the literature of all nations.

Such “ foolishness ” as Paul had in his preaching, it is very safe and very wise in us now to have. But his “ foolishness of preaching,” so called, was not *foolish* preaching, nor vulgarity, nor discourtesy. “ Since I have known God in a saving manner,” Henry

Martyn once remarked, "painting, poetry, and music, have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them: for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions for the sublime and beautiful. O how religion secures the heightened enjoyment of those pleasures which keep so many from God, by their becoming a source of pride!" Such a testimony is above suspicion, and is not to be lightly esteemed.

To her preachers, from the beginning hitherto, New England has been most indebted, under God, for her unrivalled advancement in civilization, her exalted character of intelligence, her correctness and propriety and strength of language, as well as her distinction in theology and morals. But no man can shut his eyes to the fact, that there has never been so great a degree of enlightened elevation among the people at large, nor so much of intellectual activity applied to all subjects and objects; and hence never so much of imperative demand for a high order of excellence in the general or ordinary character of the ministrations of the sanctuary. To such a state of things we must adapt ourselves, as best we may, by our diligence in study, and our increased watchfulness unto prayer. But, alas, are there not too many of us, who have no light reason to fear, that we *study far less*, because we *pray the less*? And if the study and the closet of all could here testify, would it not be said of more than one, in the lamenting confessions of another, that "want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer, through incessant sermon-making, had produced strangeness between God and his soul!"

And, my beloved and respected brethren, why is it, that we so often seem to forget, that we stand between the living and the dead? It cannot, full well I know, be expected of any of Christ's ministers, that they should always be alike interested, earnest, powerful and impressive. But if we preach of heaven and hell, as "a stone speaking to stones," or if when redeeming love is our theme, we are as cold and passionless as the unquarried marble,—how can it be, that we commend the truth to any man's conscience, or how do we anything, as becometh us, that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied?

Yet must it be remembered, that no one has a commission to preach, as if in his own hands were "the keys of hell and of death," and it was for him to open or shut at his pleasure. And a sad blemish, if not a fearful sign of the inward spirit or interior life, it must be regarded in any man's preaching, who declaims of "the damnation of hell," as if sure of personal deliverance from the wrath to come, and cared little, except as affecting his place and emoluments, whether his hearers repented, or perished! Not so was he who ceased not to warn every man, day and night, with tears, and who always exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence, and so unremittingly watched over his remaining propensities of



corruption and liabilities of iniquity,—lest after having preached the Gospel to others, he himself should be a castaway!

There are views that we might take of ourselves and our responsibilities, which, if long cherished and not counteracted, would seriously hinder us in our work, and greatly embitter our sweetest satisfactions. An example, if I do not much mistake, we have in that eminently holy young man, David Brainerd; so also in a marked degree, in the godly and devout Henry Martyn; not to speak of Payson and of others, whose praise is in all our churches. But may I say to my coævals, and more especially to my younger brethren, that, if we would have as heavenly a spirit as that of Payson, or of Martyn, or of Brainerd, and as close a walk with God,—with a cheerfulness and a loveliness unsurpassed in any whom we have ever known,—we may find a model with which many may do well to be more familiar. I refer to Robert Murray McCheyne, of the Free Church of Scotland, and who, not inappropriately, has been called the Henry Martyn of Scotland.

Perhaps some may have known of him only by that song of "*Jehovah Tzidkenu*," or "*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*,"—a strain, which would seem to be pure and sweet enough for the holiest melodies of a blood-bought harp in heaven. Upon the beauty of *his* life unto Christ—amidst severe infirmities and most arduous toils,—there was no veil, and no tinge or shadow of sombre melancholy. He had *joy in believing*; and joy over many sinners repenting. "He dwelt while here below, far away from the damps that rise about Doubting Castle, and hard by the Beulah, where the sunlight ever falls." And why should not we—all of us,—and why not all here present with us, or associated with us, as "fellow-helpers to the truth,"—why should not we all be thus devoted,—be thus lovely and heavenly,—thus happy and rejoicing in the Lord our Righteousness?

Young as he was, he was accustomed to seal his letters, with the impression of the sun going down behind the mountains, and the motto on it,—"*The night cometh*." Brethren, "the night cometh," very soon to some of us. But not too soon, for him who is ready and waiting for his Lord. Meanwhile, when so much can be attempted, and so much may be done by the faithful servant of the Son of God, in the very shortest term of active usefulness, at a period like that now passing; in a land whose far-distant west is but a hand's breadth from the Orient—a land of such providential loving-kindness, such ancestral renown, such amazing developments, hour by hour, and such wonders of magnificent and overpowering anticipation, in the accelerated coming of the future of prophecy and of hope;—O let each be valiant for the truth as in Jesus, until he shall hear the summons—"Come up hither and take thy crown!" Amen.













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